A

GRAMMAR OF RHETORIC,

AND

POLITE LITERATURE:

COMPREHENDING

THE PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE AND STYLE,

THE ELEMENTS OF TASTE AND CRITICISM;

WITH

RULES,

FOR THE STUDY OF COMPOSITION AND ELOQUENCE:

ILLUSTRATED BY

APPROPRIATE EXAMPLES,

SELECTED CHIEFLY FROM

THE BRITISH CLASSICS.

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS, OR PRIVATE INSTRUCTION.

By ALEXANDER JAMIESON, LL. D.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS Grammar of Rhetoric is designed to succeed, in the course of education, the study of English Grammar. At that period, the young student is most likely to enter with vigour upon the study of a branch of education, which has been deemed essential, in our public seminaries, to form the mind for engaging in the active concerns of life. It is then that he should be taught, that a minute and trifling study of words alone, and an ostentatious and deceitful display of ornament and pomp of expression, must be exploded from his compositions, if he would value substance rather than show, and good sense as the foundation of all good writing. The principles of sound reason, must then be employed to tame the impetuosity of youthful feeling, and direct the attention to simplicity, as essential to all true ornament.

In prosecution of this plan, the Author has, throughout this work, first laid down the principles or rules of legitimate Rhetoric; he has then given popular illustrations of these principles or rules; he has next confirmed his views, in the illustrations, by appropriate examples; and, finally, as these examples, or illustrations, furnished analyses or corollaries, he has endeavoured to make them tend to the improvement of the student's good taste, and of true ornament in composition.

Rhetoricians have usually introduced their pupils to a knowledge of their art, by some history of the origin and progress of language. Accordingly, in this volume, the Author has followed a precedent, which the world has long approved. The FIRST BOOK treats of the origin and structure of those external signs, which are used, as names, attributes, or actions of objects; or to denote the various operations of the mental faculties, with which it is our business to become acquainted.

The SECOND BOOK treats of the principles of GENERAL GRAMMAR; or, in other words, of the principles upon which philosophical grammarians have attempted to discriminate and classify the component parts of human speech, whether spoken or written. An examination of THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE USE WHICH GIVES LAW TO LANGUAGE, naturally followed the "Principles of General Grammar," and led to the development of THE NATURE AND USE OF VERBAL CRITICISM, *with its principal rules, or canons, by which, in all our decisions, we ought to be directed.* And in this branch of the subject, the object has been to exercise the understanding and natural sensibility of the pupil, by the exhibition of what has pleased or displeased critics, in the perusal of the best models of literary composition. It is presumed, that young minds will thus begin to think and feel for themselves; and, by the directions they receive, acquire confidence in their own powers, of approving or disapproving whatever falls under their general reasonings, in the higher qualities of composition. True criticism will teach the student how he may escape those errors and mistakes, to which he may be exposed, either from not understanding, or from misapplying, her established rules. But to render her assistance most effectual, the Author has dwelt very fully on the principles of GRAMMATICAL PURITY, as it respects *barbarisms, solecisms, ideotisms, vulgar-*

isms, impropriety in phrases, and as it teaches precision of expression in speech or writing.

THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES, THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PERSPICUITY, AND THE HARMONY OF PERIODS, which are illustrated in BOOK THIRD, have unfolded numerous errors to be avoided in the structure of sentences, and the arrangement of single words. The qualities of UNITY and STRENGTH, in the structure of sentences, have gathered around them a series of rules, which, if applied to the exercises that the pupil should be required to write, cannot fail to enlighten his mind, and govern his judgment, in the principles and practice of composition. It was necessary, however, to show how much PERSPICUITY of LANGUAGE and STYLE contributed to the elegance of classical compositions and eloquence; and, accordingly, this matter is treated precisely as Dr. Campbell has treated it, in his "Philosophy of Rhetoric." No writer has yet excelled Dr. Blair, in luminous views of the "Harmony of Periods;" and these views we have embodied in this Grammar.

In BOOK FOURTH, the principal "Rhetorical Figures" are treated at great length, and illustrated by copious examples, without, however, encumbering the mind of the pupil with catalogues from the ancient critics, of other figures, partly grammatical and partly rhetorical, which would have furnished little instruction, and less amusement. For it is, perhaps, not the least task on the part of the instructors of youth, to render their precepts engaging, by vivacity of imagination, and the charms of genuine ornament. This, however, is an inferior merit, when compared with the chasteness and morality which should distinguish examples and illustrations selected for youth. The principles of virtue and honour, of delicacy and refined taste, are, it is hoped, inculcated throughout these examples, with that assiduity which will entitle the Author to the humble reputation of

having laboured to improve, in those for whom he wrote, the important habits of a religious education.

In BOOK FIFTH, the NATURE OF TASTE, and the SOURCES OF ITS PLEASURES, compiled partly from Dr. Blair's Lectures, partly from Lord Kames's Elements of Criticism, and agreeably to Alison's "Essays on Taste," have been set in such lights, as may enable the youthful mind to attain some practical acquaintance with the productions of genius, in Poetry, Sculpture, or Painting. A correct perception of the excellencies of composition and eloquence, is closely connected with a knowledge of the productions in the fine arts. The young student, on being made acquainted with the principles which regulate the *standard of taste*, so far from learning to suspend the exercise of his own judgment, is taught to investigate the grounds upon which those principles are supported, and in comparing them with the simple dictates of his own mind, to form, from the various sources which reading and reflection may afford him, the elements of rearing for himself a standard of taste, to which, in more matured life, he may refer such productions of the fine arts, or of polite literature, as fall under his observation.

BOOK SIXTH, appropriated to the general characters of style, treats, first, of the *diffuse* and *concise styles* of composition; secondly, of the *dry*, *plain*, *neat*, *elegant*, and *flowing* styles; thirdly, of the *simple*, *affected*, and *vehement styles*; and then gives *directions for forming style*. Of what importance the illustrations and examples of these several styles must be in the composition of themes, it is superfluous here to speak. The remaining chapters of Book VI. are devoted to "*The Conduct of a Discourse in all its Parts*;"—to "*Historical Writing*,"—"*Annals*,"—"*Memoirs*,"—"*Biography*,"—"*Philosophical Writing*,"—"*Dialogue*," and *Epistolatory Correspondence*."

In BOOK SEVENTH, the origin and different kinds of Poetry are handled more with a view to form the pupil's taste for the study of Poetry, than to inspire him with the thirst of reaping fame in the doubtful field of poetic composition. Yet, to those whose genius may lead them that way, the principles of poetic composition, of its several styles, and of the ornaments which it admits, cannot fail to prove useful.

The conclusion of the work treats of pronunciation, or delivery, as it respects, chiefly, public speaking; and here, as in Book VI. and VII. the labours of the Author's predecessors have chiefly furnished principles and illustrations.

London, August 24, 1818.

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A

GRAMMAR OF RHETORIC.

BOOK I.

OF LANGUAGE AND STYLE AS THE FOUNDATION OF ELOQUENCE.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE IN THE STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION OF WORDS.

1. LANGUAGE may be defined, the art of communicating thought, or the ideas of the mind, by certain articulate sounds, which are used as signs of those ideas.

Illustration. Articulate sounds are those modulations of simple voice, or of sound emitted from the thorax, which are formed by means of the mouth, and its several organs, the teeth, the tongue, the lips, and the palate.

2. The connexion between words and ideas is arbitrary and conventional, owing to the agreement of men among themselves.

Illus. Different nations have different languages, or a different set of articulate sounds, which they have chosen, or framed, for communicating their ideas.

3. When we consider *written language* as a symbol of spoken, and *spoken language* as a representation of our ideas, and observe also how little relation subsists between *letters* and *sounds,* and again between *sounds* and *ideas,* we shall be satisfied that much artifice and singular efforts of ingenuity were at first employed in the construction of language, that it might accomplish the purposes of communication.

Corollary. As speech must have been absolutely necessary previous to the formation of society, the language of the first men, would be barely adequate to their present occasions; but they would enlarge and improve it as their future necessities required.

4. The cries of passion, accompanied with such motions and gestures, as are further expressive of passion, are the only signs which nature teaches all men, and which all understand. *(Art.* 30. *and* 31.)

Illus. Cries indicative of fear, and gestures expressive of peril, would be used by him who sought to warn his neighbour of danger.

Corol. Those exclamations, therefore, which have obtained the name of INTERJECTIONS, uttered in a strong and passionate manner, were, beyond doubt, in the rudest ages of the world, the first elements or beginnings of speech. Names began to be assigned to objects, when more enlarged communications became necessary.

5. The invention of words arose from the imitation, as nearly as it could be carried, of the nature or quality of the object which was named, by the sound of the name which the object or its quality received.

Illus. As a painter, who would represent grass, must employ a green colour; so in the beginning of spoken language, the man who gave a name to any thing harsh or boisterous, would employ a harsh or boisterous sound in the pronunciation of that name. He could not do otherwise, if he meant to excite in the hearer the idea of that thing which he sought to name. (See Art. 16, 17, and 18.)

Corol. The desire of men to paint, by speech, the objects which they named, in a manner more or less complete, according as the vocal organs had it in their power to effect this imitation, must have been the general motive which led men to the assignation of one name to a particular object rather than another. *(See the Illustrations to Art.* 7.)

6. Whatever objects were to be named, in which sound, or noise, or motion, was concerned, the imitation by words was abundantly obvious. Nothing was more natural, than, by the sound of the voice, to imitate the quality of the sound, or noise, or motion, which the external object made; and to form its name accordingly.

Illus. Thus, in all languages, we find words constructed upon this principle. A certain bird is called the *cuckoo* from the sound which it emits. The analogy between the word and the thing signified is discernable, when one sort of wind is said *to whistle*, and another *to roar*, when a serpent is said *to hiss*, a fly *to buzz*, and falling timber *to crash*, —when a stream is said *to flow*, thunder *to roar*, and hail *to rattle*.

7. This analogy becomes more obscure in the names of objects which address the sight only, where neither noise nor motion is concerned, and still more in the terms appropriated to moral ideas; but even here it is not altogether lost; and throughout the radical words of all languages some

degree of correspondence may be traced with the object signified.

Illus. 1. The terms significant of moral and intellectual ideas, are derived from the names of sensible objects to which they are conceived to be analogous.

2. The most distinguishing qualities of sensible objects, pertaining merely to sight, have, in a great variety of languages, certain radical sounds appropriated to the expression of those qualities. The organs of voice assume but an obscure resemblance to such external qualities as *stability* and *fluidity*, *hollowness* and *smoothness*, *gentleness* and *violence*, yet are these words painted by the sound of certain letters or syllables, which have some relation to those different states of visible objects.

3. Words formed upon *st*, usually denote firmness and strength, analogous to the Latin *sto ;* as, *stand*, *stay*, *staff*, *stop*, *stout*, *steady*, *stake*, *stamp*, *stallion*, *stately*, &c.

4. *Str*, in the beginningof words, intimates violent force and energy, analagous to the Greek στρωννυμι ; as, *strive*, *strength*, *struggle*, *stride*, *stress*, *stretch*, *strike*, *stripe*, &c.

5. *Thr*, implies forcible motion ; as, *throw*, *thrust*, *throb*, *through*, *threaten*, *thraldom*, &c.

6. *Wr*, denotes obliquity or distortion ; as, *wry*, *wrest*, *wrestle*, *wreath*, *wring*, *wrong*, *wrangle*, *wrath*, *wrack*, &c.

7. *Sw*, indicates silent agitation, or lateral motion ; as, *sway*, *swing*, *swerve*, *sweep*, *swim*, &c.

8. *Sl*, implies a gentle fall, or less observable motion ; as, *slide*, *slip*, *sly*, *slit*, *slow*, *slack*, *sling*, &c.

9. *Sp*, intimates dissipation or expansion ; as, *spread*, *sprout*, *sprinkle*, *split*, *spill*, *spring*, &c.

10. Terminations in *ash* indicate something acting nimbly and sharply ; as, *crash*, *gash*, *rash*, *flash*, *lash*, *slash*, &c.

11. *Ush*, in the ending of words, implies something acting more obtusely or dully ; as, *crush*, *brush*, *hush*, *gush*, *blush*, &c.*

Observation. These significant *roots* have been considered as a peculiar beauty or excellency of our native tongue, which, beyond all others, expresses the nature or qualities of the objects that it names, by employing sounds *sharper*, *softer*, *weaker*, *stronger*, more *obscure*, or more *stridulous*, according as the idea requires which is to be suggested.

8. The immense field of language, in every nation, is, however, filled up by numerous fanciful and irregular methods of derivation and composition.

Corol. Words, therefore, come to deviate widely from the primitive character of their *roots*, and frequently lose all analogy or resemblance in sound to the thing signified. Taken generally, as we now employ them, words may be considered as *symbols*, not as imitations ; as *arbitrary*, or *instituted*, not natural signs of ideas.

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* The President Des Brosses has very ably examined this subject in his work, entitled " Traite de la Formation Mechanique des Langues."

CHAPTER II.

OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE IN THE MANNER OF UTTERING OR PRONOUNCING WORDS.

9. A SECOND character of language, in its early state, is drawn from the manner in which mankind at first pronounced or uttered words.

Illus. 1. Interjections or passionate language being the first elements of speech, *(Corol. Art.* 4.) men would labour to communicate their feelings to one another, by those expressive cries and gestures, which they were taught by nature. *(Art.* 4. *Illus.)*

2. Language in its infancy, picturesque but barren, would be intermixed with many exclamations and earnest gestures. Its scanty vocabulary rendered these helps necessary for explaining the conceptions of uncultivated men.

3. Tones, rough and unmusical at first, and significant gesticulations would supply the temporary absence of the few words which men knew ; and by these supplemental methods they would endeavour to make intelligible to others what they themselves understood. *(Art.* 46. *Corol.)*

Corol. It may hence be assumed as a principle, that pronunciation, in the earliest languages, though learnt from the uninterrupted use of gutteral sounds, was accompanied with more gesticulations than are used when men become refined by civilization, arts, and sciences.

10. What had risen from necessity continued to be used for ornament, after language became more extensive and copious. Wherever there was much fire and vivacity in the genius of nations, the imagination was gratified with a great deal of action ; and, as their ear acquired delicacy and sensibility, their language would gradually attain softness and melody of tones in conversation, or public discourse.

Illus. Upon this principle men spoke by action. Jeremiah, in sight of the people of Israel, breaks a potter's vessel—throws a book into the Euphrates—puts on bonds and yokes, and carries out his household stuff. The Indians of North America, also, declare their meaning, and explain themselves by belts and strings of *wampum*, as much as by their discourse, with all its significant but flowery modes of expression. *(Illus. Art.* 18.)

11. Some nations have found it easier to express different ideas, by varying the tone with which they pronounced the same word, than to contrive words for all their ideas.

Illus. Thus, the number of original words in the Chinese language is not great, but, in speech, the sound of each word is varied on no fewer than five different tones. The same word may therefore signify five different things ; and be expressed by five different characters.

Hence arises their unwieldly alphabet, or lexicon. This melody, or varying the sound of each word so often, is a proof of nothing, however, but of the fine ear of that people. (*Corol. Art.* 13.)

12. When the harsh and dissonant cries of speech have become gradually polished, they pass into more smooth and harmonious sounds (*Art.* 10.); and hence is formed what grammarians call *the prosody of a language.*

Obs. Without attending to this we shall be at a loss to understand several parts of the Greek and Roman classics, which relate to public speaking, and the theatrical entertainments of the ancients. (*Illus. Art.* 13.)

13. When the Greek and Roman languages became flowing and harmonious, the pronunciation of both became melodious in a very high degree. It does not, however, appear that the languages of any cultivated nations have ever been regulated by any musical principles. As the copiousness and accuracy of speech keep pace with civilization and improvement, its melody corresponds to the refinement of the public ear. (*Illus. Art.* 11.)

Illus. 1. The declamation of the Greek and Roman orators, and the pronunciation of their actors upon the stage, were not indeed subjected to a geometrical scale of proportion, as the notes of music are; but the melody of their periods was artfully regulated by the superior refinement of their ear.

2. The sounds of speech and music are regulated by different scales, both in point of length and elevation. In point of length, the sounds of speech are only two, the one double the other; for all words consist of syllables either long or short, and the long syllable is invariably double the length of the short one. The sounds of music being measured by a geometrical scale of proportion, may be extended as far as the composer pleases. In respect of elevation and depression the sounds of speech are subject to no rule: their distances are neither equal nor great. The speaker may divide them according to his inclination, and the utmost compass of ordinary speech seldom extends beyond the distance of a few notes in music. It is not so with the tones of music: their distances are all determined by rule, and the elevations and depressions, though sometimes very considerable, are adjusted with the greatest nicety of geometrical science.

3. Aristotle considers the music of tragedy as one of its chief and essential parts; but he does not assuredly mean that the Greeks spoke in recitative, or that part of the word, or part of the sentence, was uttered in the ordinary tones of conversation, while the remaining part was pronounced in tones of music. The whole of an oration, or tragedy, might be accompanied with musical instruments; but the language of passion is inconsistent with recitative. The tones of music are not the language of passion, and the language of nature is the same in all ages and countries. (*Art.* 10. *Illus. and also Art.* 11.)

4. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, in his book on composition, that treats professedly on the melody of language, is at great pains to illustrate his sentiments from the compositions of Demosthenes, and to

point out how artfully that great orator had consulted the melody of his periods, by inserting in his cadences many dactyles, spondees, iambics, and other agreeable metrical feet. The introduction of these feet he calls—" writing rhythmical," or " melodious prose."

5. It is plain also from the oratory of Cicero, that the Romans did not speak in tones of music, or recitative. He informs us that *numerus* or rhythm was not employed except in the most splendid parts of an oration; and that it ought not to be long continued, lest the artifice of the orator should be detected, and his aim to impress his hearers defeated.

6. Dionysius, however, proceeds further than Cicero, and contrasts the harmonious examples extracted from Demosthenes, with specimens adduced from the writings of Polybius, " the harshness of whose periods," he asserts, " is owing to the neglect of rhythm."

Corol. 1. Therefore, the melody of a language is a proof of nothing but of the fine ear of the people who use it, *(Illus. Art.* 11.) ; other evidence is necessary to shew that it was spoken in what the Italians call *recitativo.*

2. The ῥυθμὸς then, of the Greeks, and the *numerus* of the Romans, expressed nothing that is now either unintelligible or unknown, and afford no evidence that the ancients either spoke commonly in recitative, or intermixed notes of music with the tones of speech.

3. And, hence, the modern languages of Europe, abounding with long and short syllables, are susceptible of *rhythm*, as well as the Greek and Latin ; and the assemblages of these long and short syllables, in what the ancients called *feet*, are not confined to the poetry of our native Isles, but are actually introduced by our best prose writers. Yet no one expects to hear the plays of Shakspeare sung, and we did not hear Pitt and Sheridan speak in recitative.

14. Strong tones, and animated gestures, go always together; hence, *action* is treated by all the ancient critics, as the chief quality in every public speaker.

Illus. 1. We learn from Cicero, that it was a contest between him and Roscius, whether he could express a sentiment in a greater variety of phrases, or Roscius in a greater variety of intelligible and significant gestures.

2. When gesture came to engross the Roman stage wholly, the favorite entertainment of the public was *pantomime*, which was carried on, as it still is, entirely by mute gesticulation. Under the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius, the people were moved and wept at it, as much as at tragedies.

Corol. All speculations concerning the fixing of a living language are, therefore, vain and nugatory, and when the good taste of a nation has prevailed universally, writers of established reputation become its authorities.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE IN THE STYLE AND CHARACTER OF SPEECH.

15. FROM what has been said in the preceding chapters, it appears that men at first uttered their words, and maintained conversation, in a strong and impressive manner, enforcing their imperfectly conceived ideas by cries and gestures; and there is abundant evidence to shew that the language which they used was little else than a torrent of figures and metaphors, not correct indeed, but forcible and picturesque. *(Art.* 19. *Illus.)*

Corol. Figures of speech are, therefore, not the invention of orators and rhetoricians; but the language of mankind, when they had hardly any words for expressing their meaning.

16. The want of a distinct name for every individual object, obliged the first speakers to use one name for many objects. *(Art.* 5. *Illus. and Corol.)*

Corol. They would, thence, express themselves by comparisons, metaphors, allusions, and all those substituted forms of speech, which render language figurative and picturesque.

17. As the names with which they were most conversant, were those of the sensible, material objects around them, names would be given to those objects long before words were invented for signifying the dispositions of the mind, or any sort of moral or intellectual ideas. *(Art.* 48.)

Corol. Hence, the early language of man being entirely made up of words descriptive of sensible objects, it became, of necessity, extremely metaphorical. Every desire or passion, every act or feeling of mind, to which no precise expression had been appropriated, would be painted by allusion to those sensible objects which had most relation to it, and which, in some manner, could render it visible to others. *(Art.* 10.)

18. In the infancy of society, men are much under the dominion of imagination and passion; and these are the parents of a figurative style, of exaggeration and hyperbole. *(Art.* 19. *Illus.* 1. *and* 3.)

Illus. In this period of society, men live scattered and dispersed. They are unacquainted with the course of things; they are daily meeting with new and strange objects. Fear and surprise, wonder and astonishment, are their most frequent passions. Their language partakes of this character of their agitated and expanding minds. They will be prone to exaggeration and hyperbole. Where all is marvellous, the imagination will riot in the luxuriance of an unbounded picturesque. *(Art.* 10. *Illus.)*

Corol. Wherever strong exclamations, tones and gestures, enter much into conversation, the imagination is always more exercised; a greater effort of fancy and passion is excited. Consequently, the fancy kept awake, and rendered more sprightly by this mode of utterance, operates upon style, and enlivens it with the strongest colours, and the most vehement expressions of untamed passion. *(Art. 15. Corol.)*

19. Undoubted facts confirm these reasonings. The style of all the earliest languages, among nations who are in the first and rude periods of society, is found, without exception, to be full of figures; and to be hyperbolical and picturesque in a high degree. *(Art. 5. and 10.)*

Illus. 1. The American Indian languages are known to be figurative to excess. The Iroquois and Illinois carry on their treaties and public transactions with bolder metaphors, and greater pomp of style, than we use in our poetical productions.*

2. In the Old Testament,—the best specimen of oriental style,—constant allusions to sensible objects characterize the language of the various writers. Thus, guilt is *a spotted garment;* iniquity is *the treasures of darkness;* a sinful life is *a crooked path;* misery *drinks the cup of astonishment;* vain pursuits are seen *feeding on ashes;* innocence is known by *its white robes;* wisdom is *a lighted candle;* and royal dignity is *purple* and a *crown.*

3. In the poems of Ossian, too, figures of speech abound; picturesque descriptions are as the "sons of song," for number; or as the heroes' "breasts of steel," for strength of expression; or as the "meteors of death," for the illusions they create in a reader's mind; and all the violent expressions of passion uttered about "the white-bosomed love of Cormac;" or about Fingal "of the noble deeds;" him who "flew like lightning over the heath;" or "slowly moved as a cloud of thunder, when the sultry plain of summer is silent," whose "sword is before him terrible as the streaming meteor of night—" confirm the position, that this sort of style is common to all nations in certain periods of society and language. A narration is condensed into a few striking circumstances, which rouse and alarm: the account of a battle is as rapid as the wounds of a warrior, and the deaths he inflicts!

20. Magnanimity and delicacy characterize strongly the poetry of rude nations, who, in the use of metaphors and similes, make little or no allusion to the productions of the arts. *(Art. 29. Illus.)*

Illus. Magnanimity and delicacy are nearly, if not necessarily, connected with all the strong and violent emotions of the mind; and these are the natural produce of an early, if not of a savage state of society. Strong emotions constitute the chief ingredient in magnanimity; and it requires only one addition to give them the polish of delicacy.

Corol. It is not improbable, that particular circumstances may prompt the latter sentiment, long before the introduction either of philosophy or of the arts. Those who are acquainted with human nature, and the analogy which subsists among its feelings, will there-

* See Cadwallader Colden's "History of the Five Indian Nations."

fore allow the uncommon magnanimity and delicacy of Ossian, "king of songs," to be no strong objections against the antiquity of his productions.

21. From what has been said, it plainly appears that the style of all languages must have been originally poetical; strongly tinctured with that enthusiasm, that descriptive metaphorical expression, and that magnanimity and delicacy, which distinguish poetry. *(Art.* 30. *Illus.)*

Obs. But these points will be further discussed when we come to treat "of the nature and origin of poetry."

22. As language, in its progress, began to grow more copious, it gradually lost that figurative style, which was its early character. *(Art.* 31. *and* 32.*)*

Illus. Proper and familiar names for every object, both sensible and moral, pushed out of discourse the use of circumlocutions. Style became more precise, and, of course, more simple, in proportion as society advanced in civilization, and reason subdued the imagination of mankind. The exercise of the understanding now rarely permitted that of the fancy; and frequent and extensive intercourse among mankind obliged them to signify their meaning to each other by clearness of style. In place of poets, philosophers became the instructors of men: and in their reasonings on all different subjects, introduced that plainer and simpler style of composition, which, at this day, we call *Prose.*

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE, AS RESPECTS THE ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF WORDS IN SENTENCES.

23. THE imagination and the understanding are the powers of the mind which chiefly influence the arrangement of words in sentences. The grammatical order is dictated by the understanding; the inverted order results from the prevalence of the imagination. *(See the theory of Arrangement, Art.* 24.*)*

Illus. 1. In the grammatical order of words, it is required that the agent or nominative shall first make its appearance; the agent is followed by the action or the verb; and the verb is succeeded by the subject or accusative, termed, in English Grammars, the objective case, on which the action is exerted: In this logical order, an English writer, paying a compliment to a great man, would say: "It is impossible for me to pass over in silence such remarkable mildness, such singular and unheard of clemency, and such unusual moderation, in the exercise of supreme power." Here we have first presented to us the person who speaks, "It is impossible for *me;*" next, what that

person is to do, "impossible for him *to pass over in silence;*" and, lastly, the object which moves him to do so, "*the mildness, clemency, and moderation of a man in the exercise of supreme power.*"

2. The inverted order is prompted by the imagination, a keen and sprightly faculty, which attaches itself strongly to its objects, and to those the most that affect it most forcibly. A sentence constructed according to this faculty, presents the subject or accusative, first, the agent or recipient next, and the action or verb last. The order of the Latin language gratifies the rapidity of the imagination; and accordingly, Cicero, from whom we have translated the words in the former illustration, follows the natural order: "Tantam mansuetudinem, tam inusitatem inauditamque clementiam, tantumque in summa potestate rerum omnium modum, tacitus nullo modo præterire possum."* The object, that which was the exciting idea in the speaker's mind, is placed first, and the sentence concludes with the speaker and his action.

3. The other parts of speech, consisting of adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions, are, in both these modes of arrangement, intermixed with these capital parts, and are associated with them respectively, according as they are necessary to restrict or explain them.

24. From these illustrations, the following simple and natural theory results, relative to the arrangement of words in sentences, unless their order be disturbed by considerations respecting melody and cadence, of which we shall hereafter take notice;—that in all periods of society, and in all countries in which men are guided more by the influence of imagination, than by the cool dictates of reason, language adopts an inverted order or arrangement; but that inversion is diminished in proportion as imagination subsides, and reason gains the ascendant; and that among people addicted to research and philosophical investigation, it in a great measure disappears. *(Art.* 30. *Illus.)*

Obs. We have seen that the arrangement in a Latin sentence is the more animated; the English construction is more clear and distinct. The Romans generally arranged their words according to the order in which the ideas rose in the imagination; we marshal them according to the order in which the understanding directs those ideas to be exhibited, in succession, to the view of another.

Corol. Our arrangement, therefore, appears to be the consequence of greater refinement in the art of speech; as far as clearness in communication is understood to be the end of speech.

25. In the early periods of society, and even in the early part of life, we observe the mind disposed to inversion; because in these times the imagination is more vivid and active, and the powers of reason are more languid and ineffectual. *(Art.* 30.*)*

* Orat. pro Marcell.

Illus. If a person of a warm imagination, a savage or a child, beheld an object, suppose any kind of fruit, as an acorn, which he was anxious to possess, and to obtain it, he were to express himself in the order prompted by the immediate feelings of his mind; the first thing that would excite his attention, and which, consequently, he would first name, is the acorn; himself, who was to enjoy the fruit, would next engage his attention; and the action—that which was to gratify his wishes—would finally attract his consideration. His arrangement would therefore be that, which, in similar cases, is authorized by the sprightly languages of Greece and Rome, "βάλανον μοι δος," "Glandem mihi præbe;" not that which the more phlegmatic and philosophical tongues of modern Europe would require, and which the strict grammatical order of our own language demands—"Give me the acorn;" or "Give the acorn to me."

26. Though the vivacity of the genius of the Greeks and Romans, might incline them to prefer the poetical and inverted arrangement of their words, they owed, to the structure of their languages, the possibility of indulging this disposition.

Illus. The numerous inflections of their declinable parts of speech; the correspondence, for example, between the verb and its nominative, so obviously pointed out by the terminations of the former, as to supersede, in most cases, the necessity, and even the propriety, of using the latter; the palpable relation between the adjective and the substantive, indicated by the invariable agreement of the former with the latter, in gender, number, and case; the various cases of their substantives, which, on many occasions, supplied the place of prepositions;—all contributed to leave the Greeks and Romans at liberty to gratify their feelings, or to consult the melody of their periods, by the arrangement of their words in sentences, without incurring the risk of diminishing the perspicuity of their compositions.

27. The inflections of the modern languages are few, and preclude the arrangement which the tongues of antiquity found so much to the gratification of the imagination and of the ear. And hence the first rule of good writing or speaking, is, to preserve perspicuity, which on no account can be sacrificed to any secondary consideration.

Obs. This indispensable law demands, that the arrangement of modern languages, should proceed nearly in the grammatical order; because juxta-position is almost the only means by which they can intimate the mutual relation of the several words in a sentence to one another.

28. All the cultivated modern languages,—the French, the Italian, the Spanish, the German, and the English,—are extremely circumscribed in point of inflection; but the English more than any of the rest. There is not, perhaps, to be found in any age, a polished language of greater simplicity, the Hebrew itself not excepted.

Illus. We have no genders but those of nature, the male and the female; our substantives have no more cases than two; and only a few of our pronouns have three: our adjectives have neither gender, nor number, nor case; and all the inflections of our verbs, do not perhaps exceed half a dozen.

Obs. In point of precision and accuracy, our own language, in the hands of a writer of genius, appears to be superior to the Latin and equal to the Greek. The great end of language is to communicate thought with ease and expedition, for the improvement and happiness of human life; and, considering the importance of this communication, the language which is least liable to equivocation, is a most valuable acquisition. For the purposes of business, and the researches of philosophy, our own language merits every praise; and though inferior to the language of Greece and Rome, in works addressed to the imagination and the heart, it yields to neither of them, nor to any modern language, in its qualifications to do justice to the most sublime conceptions on the capital subjects of genius.

29. The prevalence of imagination and passion in the early stages of society, accounts also, satisfactorily, for the poetical inversions of style, which are found in these periods, and, of course, for the priority of poetry to prose compositions. *(Art. 21. and 22.)*

Illus. The attachment of love, gratitude to a deliverer, or to the gods, with whom the creed of infant society replenished the skies, admiration of the works of nature, in the splendour of summer, or the grandeur of winter, in the beauties of spring, or the abundance of autumn, would early prompt the sentiments and language of poetry. The invention of versification would quickly follow the possession of poetical ideas; and its apparent ingenuity would contribute to its recommendation. Though it is a more artificial mode of expression than prose, yet it is not to be doubted that it was first introduced; and the history of Homer's compositions, or the Poems of Ossian, induce a belief, that it preceded even writing. *(Art. 23. Illus. 1. and 3. also Art. 33.)*

30. Though poetry is the more artificial mode of composition, it is not perhaps the more difficult. Composition in prose could not be well executed, till writing was invented; and writing is a *modern* invention, in comparison of speaking. The appearance of good prose, is therefore posterior to that of good poetry; and excellence in the former, is among the latest attainments of polished nations. Good poetry is perfectly consistent with no high degree of precision of thought, or accuracy of expression. *(Art. 20. Cor.)*

Illus. The period most favourable for poetical exertions, is situated between the decline of the general influence of the powers of imagination on society, and the general cultivation of the faculty of reason, by science and philosophy; it is then that the poet has the best chance of possessing the greatest compound quality of the powers of imagina-

tion and judgment he can ever attain. Such, it seems, were the periods which produced Homer, Virgil, and Milton. *(Art. 22. Illus.)*

CONCLUSION.

31. From what has been said in the preceding chapters, a foundation has been laid for many observations, both curious and useful. It appears, that language was, at first, barren in words, but descriptive by the sound of those words; and expressive in the manner of uttering them, by the aid of significant tones and gestures. Style was figurative and poetical; arrangement was fanciful and lively. In all the successive changes which language has undergone, as the world advanced, the understanding has gained ground on the fancy and imagination. The progress of language in this respect, resembles the progress of age in man. The imagination is most vigorous and predominant in youth; with advancing years, the imagination cools, and the understanding ripens.

32. Thus language, proceeding from sterility to copiousness, hath, at the same time, proceeded from vivacity to accuracy; from the fire of poetical enthusiasm, to the coolness of philosophical precision. Those characters of early language, descriptive sound, vehement tones and gestures, figurative style, and inverted arrangement, all hang together, have a mutual relation on each other; and have all gradually given place to arbitrary sounds, calm pronunciation, simple style, plain arrangement. Language is become, in modern times, more correct indeed, and accurate; but less striking and animated: in its ancient state, more favourable to poetry and oratory; in its present, more adapted to reason and philosophy.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF WRITING.

33. NEXT to speech, WRITING is, beyond doubt, the most useful art which men possess. It is plainly an improvement upon spoken language, and therefore must have been posterior to it in order of time.

Illus. At first, men thought of nothing more than communicating their thoughts to one another, when present, by means of words, or sounds, which they uttered. Afterwards, they devised, by means of

marks or characters, presented to the eye, and which we call writing, this further method, when absent, of mutual communication one with another

34. Written characters are of two sorts: they are either signs for *things*, or signs for *words*. The pictures, hieroglyphics, and symbols, employed by the ancient nations, are signs *of things*, and belong to the former class; the alphabetical characters, now employed by all Europeans, are signs *for words*, and belong to the latter class.

Illus. Pictures were, undoubtedly, the first essay toward writing. Imitation is natural to man; children copy or trace the likeness of sensible objects, before they can signify the names of those objects by written characters. The savage, to intimate that his father had vanquished an enemy, would draw the figure of one man stretched upon the earth, and of another standing over him with a deadly weapon in his hand. When the Mexicans sent intelligence to Montezuma, their prince, of the arrival of the Spaniards in the bay of Campeachy, they scratched pictures of the men, horses, and artillery, that they had seen, and conveyed these to their monarch. The chieftain understood them, and immediately dispatched an embassy to meet the Spanish commander.

Obs. Historical pictures are, however, but extremely imperfect records of important transactions. They do, indeed, delineate external events; but they cannot transmit their memory through a long succession of ages; and they fail entirely to exhibit such qualities as are most visible to the eye, or to convey, by description, any idea of the dispositions or words of men.

35. This rude attempt towards writing, was, in process of time, improved by the invention of what are called *hieroglyphical characters*. These may be considered as the second stage in the art of writing, as they represented intellectual conceptions, or those not suggested by any external or visible objects. The analogy or resemblance which such symbols were supposed to bear to the objects, was conventional, but liable to forced and ambiguous allusions.

Illus. Thus an *eye* was the hieroglyphical symbol of *knowledge*; a *circle*, of *eternity*, which has neither beginning nor end; *ingratitude* was denominated by a *viper*; *imprudence*, by a *fly*; *wisdom*, by an *ant*; *victory*, by a *hawk*; a *dutiful child*, by a *stork*; and a *wretch*—a *man universally shunned*—by an *eel*, which is not to be found in company with other fishes.

Corol. But these properties of objects were merely imaginary; and the conjunction, or compounding of the characters, rendered them obscure, and expressed indistinctly the connections and relations of the objects which they represented. Hence, this species of writing could be no other than enigmatical, and confused in the highest degree; and must have been a very imperfect vehicle of knowledge of any kind.

Obs. There is no reason however to suppose that the priests of

Egypt, among whom hieroglyphical characters were first found, and who were also the instructors of their countrymen, introduced and employed them for the purpose of concealing their knowledge from the vulgar. The latter are little troublesome about the acquisition of useful knowledge in any state of society; and the former were too enlightened not to know, that one of the principal pleasures and honours attending the possession of knowledge, is to instruct others.

36. As writing advanced, from pictures of visible objects, to hieroglyphics, or symbols of things invisible; from these latter it advanced, among some nations, to *simple arbitrary marks*, which stood for objects, but without any resemblance or analogy to the objects signified.

Illus. 1. Of this nature, was the method of writing practised among the Peruvians. They made use of small *cords of different colors;* and upon these, by means of *knots* of various sizes, and differently ranged, they contrived *signs* for giving information, and communicating their thoughts to one another; but this invention afforded less security against frequent and gross mistakes, than the hieroglyphic archetypes of abstract ideas. *(Corol. Art.* 35.)

2. The use of hieroglyphical characters still exists in China, where they have been brought to greater perfection than in any other quarter of the globe. But every idea is expressed by a separate character. The characters, it is said, amount to upwards of 70,000. An acquaintance with the means of communicating knowledge, is, therefore, the business of a whole life, and must greatly retard the progress of all science. In short, science in China is always in a state of infancy.

3. Our arithmetical figures, which we have derived from the Arabians, are significant marks, precisely of the same nature with the Chinese characters. They have no dependence on words; but each figure denotes an object; denotes the number for which it stands. *(Illus.* 5.)

4. The Japanese, the Tonquinese, and the Coræans, speak different languages from one another, and from the inhabitants of China, but use, with these last people, the same written characters; a proof that the Chinese characters are like hieroglyphics, independent of language.

5. In like manner the Italians, French, Spaniards, and English, speak different languages, but the Arabic characters 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. are, on being presented to the eye, equally understood by those four nations, as signs of things, not of words. Thus, 4 may be four *ships*, four *men*, four *trees*, four *years;* in short, *four things*. *(Illus.* 3.)

37. A combination of sounds forms, in various ways, all the variety of words in spoken language. These sounds are few, and are continually recurring for repetition in discourse. They would lead to the invention of an alphabet of syllables. A sign, or mark, for each of these syllables, would form an alphabet of letters. The number of these marks, or characters, would be equal to the number of sounds or syllables. These sounds reduced to their simple elements of a few vowels and consonants, indicated by a par-

ticular sign to each, would form what we now call *letters.* Some happy genius taught men how, by the combinations of these letters, to put in writing all the different words, or associations of sound, which were employed in speech.

Obs. Such seem to have been the introductory steps to the art of writing; but the darkness of remote antiquity has concealed the great inventor's name of this sublime and refined discovery, and deprived him of those honours which, were it known, would still be paid to his memory, by all the lovers of knowledge and learning.

38. The universal tradition among the ancients is, that *letters* were first imported into Greece by Cadmus, the Phœnician, at least 3000 years ago; and from Greece dispersed over the western part of the world. The alphabet of Cadmus consisted only of sixteen letters, but it comprehended all the original sounds, which are said to be only thirteen. The remaining letters were afterwards added, according as signs for proper sounds were said to be wanting.

Illus. The Roman alphabet, which obtains with us, and with most of the European nations, is, with a few variations, evidently formed on that of the Greeks. And all learned men observe, that the Greek characters especially, according to the manner in which they are formed in the oldest inscriptions, have a remarkable conformity to the Hebrew or Samaritan characters, which, it is agreed, are the same with the Phœnician for Alphabet of Cadmus.

39. The most ancient method of writing seems to have been in lines running from right to left. This method is still retained in the Hebrew language.

Obs. The Greeks improved upon this method, and wrote in lines alternately from the right to the left, which was called *Boustrophedon;* or writing after the manner in which oxen plough the ground. About the time of Solon, the Athenian legislator, the custom is said to have been introduced, and which still prevsils, of writing in lines from left to right.

40. The writing of antiquity was a species of engraving. Pillars, and tables of stone, were first employed for this purpose, and afterwards, plates of the softer metals, such as lead; or tables of wax and skins of parchment. A polished point of iron called a *stilus* was used to scratch letters on the wax; but the writing on parchment was performed with *pen and ink.* *(Art.* 41. *Illus.* 1. *and* 2.*)*

Obs. 1. On the parchment were written books and records, and every kind of composition which its author wished to preserve; on the tablets of wax temporary matters of business, and epistles that were not designed for the inspection of a third person's eyes. The writing on parchment was the most expensive, but the most permanent; that on wax, the cheapest and readiest, but the least durable. *(Illus.* 1. *Art.* 41.*)*

2. Our present method of writing on paper, is an invention of no higher antiquity than the 14th century: and the invention of printing was reserved for an obscure monk in the beginning of the 15th. This inventor might probably receive a hint toward this invention, from the Roman practice of carving letters on boards of wood, and of employing them to abridge the trouble of writing, by stamping names and inscriptions on parchment and wax.

CHAPTER VI.

A COMPARISON

OF SPOKEN WITH WRITTEN LANGUAGE: OR,

Of Words uttered in our hearing, with Words represented to the eye.

41. THE advantages of writing above speech are, that *writing* is both a more extensive, and a more permanent method of communicating our thoughts to mankind.

Illus. 1. *More extensive*, as it is not confined within the narrow circle of those who hear our words; but, by means of written characters, we can send our thoughts abroad, and propagate them through the world; we can thus lift our voice, so as to speak to those to whom, in our own country, we may not have access, and to men of the most distant regions of the earth. (*Obs.* 1. *Art.* 40.)

2. *More permanent* also, as it prolongs the voice to the most distant ages; and gives us the means of recording our sentiments to futurity, and of perpetuating the instructive memory of past transactions (*Obs.* 2. *Art.* 40.)

3. It likewise affords this advantage to such as read, above such as hear, that having the written characters before their eyes, they can arrest the sense of the writer; they can pause and resolve, and compare at their leisure, one passage with another; whereas the voice is fugitive in passing; you must catch the words the moment they are uttered, or you lose them for ever.

42. But although these be so great advantages of written language, that speech, without writing, would have been very inadequate for the instruction of mankind: yet we must not forget to observe, that *spoken language has a great superiority* over written language, *in point of energy and force.*

Illus. 1. The voice of the living speaker makes an impression on the mind, much stronger than can be made by the perusal of any writing.

2. The tones of the voice, the looks and gestures, which accompany discourse, and which no writing can convey, render speech, when it is ingeniously managed, infinitely more clear, and more expressive than

the most accurate writing. For tones, looks, and gestures, are natural interpreters of the mind. They remove ambiguities—they enforce expressions—they operate on us by means of sympathy.

3. And sympathy is one of the most powerful instruments of persuasion. Our sympathy is always awakened more by hearing the speaker, than by reading his works in our closet.

Corol. Hence, though writing may answer the purposes of mere instruction, as the symbolical language of Algebra does the mathematical science—all the great and high efforts of eloquence must be made by means of spoken, not of written, language:—and thus have we traced from their origin, through different stages of improvement, language and style as the foundation of eloquence.

BOOK II.

OF THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE; OR THE PRINCIPLES OF GENERAL GRAMMAR.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE SEVERAL PARTS OF WHICH SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IS COMPOSED.

43. THE structure of language is extremely artificial; and there are few sciences in which a deeper, or more refined logic is employed, than in grammar.

Obs. Without discussing the niceties of language in the several parts of speech of which it is composed, we shall now take a popular, but philosophical view of the chief principles, and component parts of speech, as far as they are necessary to illustrate general grammar, and to ascertain the maxims of correct taste and elegant composition.

44. The essential parts of speech are the same in all languages. There must ever be some words which denote the names of objects, or mark the subject of discourse; other words which denote the qualities of those objects, and express what we affirm concerning them: and other words, which point out their connexions and relations.

Corol. The most simple and comprehensive division of the parts of speech, is, therefore, into *substantives*, *attributes*, and *connectives*.

45. The common division, or arrangement of all the words of our own language, comprises the

ARTICLE,	VERB,	PREPOSITION,
NOUN,	PARTICIPLE,	INTERJECTION,
PRONOUN,	ADVERB,	CONJUNCTION.

Obs. But the following paragraph will instruct us to direct our attention chiefly to the noun and the verb, as a few observations will illustrate those other parts of speech, to which our ears have been familiarized.

46. Every thing about which our minds can be employed in thinking, every thing which can be the subject of our knowledge, must relate to *substances* that exist, either in *reality*, or in the *imagination*; or to *actions*, *operations*, and

energies, which these substances produce on themselves, or on one another.

Corol. Language communicates knowledge; its divisions of words, therefore, correspond with the divisions of our knowledge; its chief business is consequently reduced to two heads:—

First, to exhibit *names* for all the substances with which we are acquainted, that we may be able to distinguish and recognize them, when they are mentioned by ourselves, or others: and,

Secondly, to denote the *actions*, *operations*, and *energies*, which these substances generate upon themselves, or on one another.

47. NAMES are expressed by what grammarians call *Nouns*; OPERATIONS are denoted by what they call *Verbs*; the other parts of speech explain, modify, extend, restrict, connect, or disjoin, the noun and the verb.

Corol. The two former are, therefore, the essential ingredients, or the columns of language; the latter are only occasional ingredients, or appendages of these pillars of the fabric. *(Art.* 44.*)*

48. The first process in the communication of knowledge is to contrive names for all the substances about which our knowledge is conversant, and by common consent to impose the same names on the same substances. *(Art.* 17. *and* 18.*)*

Illus. As substantives are the ground work of all language, a language is perfect in respect to them, when a name has been given to every material or immaterial substance about which the people who use the language have occasion to speak or write. As their knowledge enlarges, as they obtain more ideas of substances than they have names to express, new names will be imposed on these new substances, which will consequently throw into their vocabulary as many new substantives, as may render their language adequate to the purposes of ready communication.

Corol. Hence, if every substance in nature required a particular name to distinguish it from all other substances; every mineral, plant, animal, and every part of every animal, should obtain a distinct name, which would increase the substantives of a language beyond all computation. But nature has reduced her productions into classes: the individuals of every class, resemble one another, in many particulars; and therefore it is that language hath not assigned a name to every substance. Even her different classes are formed with some common properties; and thus, in some particulars, the different classes resemble one another. Thus, the generic word *plant*, expresses the common qualities of all vegetables; *animal*, the common qualities of all living creatures.

49. These GENERA are divided into what we term *species*, and these species are again divided into *inferior species*, or become *genera* to other species.

Illus. Thus the word *plant*, is a general term, which indicates trees, shrubs, grasses, and all vegetables which spring from a root, and bear

branches and leaves. And under the comprehensive term *animal*, we range men, horses, lions, sheep, and, in short, all living creatures. But trees are again divided into oaks, pines, palms; and men into white, black, tawny, &c.

50. This arrangement abridges the number of nouns, and gives names only to classes of substances, compelling one name to point out a whole class.

Illus. Thus, *tree* expresses a whole genus of plants; each of the words *oak*, *pine*, *palm*, denotes a whole species. But language stoops not to give a name to every oak, and she hath left it to beings of a sentient nature, to particularize each other. *(Corol. Art.* 48.)

51. To characterize individuals by names, language departs from its ordinary analogy.

Illus. This necessity—a mere refinement in the communication of thought—extends to countries and cities, to all the individuals of the human race, and sometimes to the inferior animals.

For example: Italy, Rome; Greece, Athens; Alexander, Bucephalus, are all *individuals;* and the particular names which we appropriate to each of them, prevents ambiguous and disagreeable circumlocutions, or descriptions, to make it known.

52. We deduce, from these observations, the meaning of the grammatical division of nouns into COMMON and PROPER. The COMMON NOUNS are, (by the *illustration* to Article 50) *the names of classes of individuals.* The PROPER NOUNS, (by the *Illustration* and *Example* of Article 51,) are all *names of individuals.*

53. The noun *tree* denotes any individual of the whole species in the singular number; and, in the plural, all the individuals of the species. *Alexander*, on the contrary, is a particular name, and is restricted to distinguish him alone.

Illus. On this principle, are all *common nouns* susceptible of number, *singular* or *plural*, as they denote one, or more than one, of a species; and hence, also, it appears plain, why *proper* nouns do not take a *plural* form, except in some instances, when they express more than one individual of a species, and of the same name; as "the twelve Cæsars," "the Henries of England."

Corol. The only nouns of language are, therefore, *common nouns;* proper *nouns* being local and occasional, appropriated to persons and places, make no part of general communication. *(Compare Art.* 52. *and Illus. to Art.* 50. *and* 51.)

54. NUMBER, which distinguishes objects as singly or collectively, must have been coeval with the very infancy of language, because there were few things which men had more frequent occasion to express, than the difference between one and many.

Obs. The distinctions of number are signified, in most languages,

by some change in the terminations of the nouns, and it rarely happens that the change is extended further than to denote, whether one individual, or all the individuals of the species, be understood. The Greek *dual* is not more necessary for the purposes of communication, than a triple, a quadruple, a centuple, or any other plural number, where the richness of a language would furnish it, to denote a given number of individuals of the species.

55. Substantives are susceptible of other concomitant circumstances, besides their capacity to denote difference of number. These circumstances are the variations of the terminations, and are called CASES.

Illus. 1. This peculiarity of substantives or nouns, is a necessary provision for expressing the circumstances attending them, and has been accomplished in two ways, either by varying their terminations, or by preferring auxiliary words. The ancient languages employed the former of these methods; the modern languages accomplish the same end, by prefixing *particles* or *prepositions*.

2. These methods are perhaps nearly equal, in respect of perspicuity; but that of antiquity is preferable, in point of melody. Particles and prepositions are mostly monosyllables, and the frequency with which they must be used, impairs the modulation of language.

3. The Greek language has five cases in the singular, two in the dual, and four in the plural number.

4. The Latin tongue has sometimes six, but generally five, in the singular, and four in the plural.

5. No cases appear in the Italian, the French, and the Spanish languages; and there are not more than two in the English.

56. GENDER, another peculiarity of substantive nouns, in the grammatical structure of language, arises out of the difference of sex, discernible only in animals. It will therefore admit of two varieties, the MASCULINE and FEMININE genders, agreeably to the distinction of living creatures into male and female. All other substantive nouns ought to belong to what grammarians call the *neuter gender*, which is a negation of the other two.

Illus. 1. In the structure of language, a remarkable singularity hath obtained with respect to this distribution. In most languages, men have ranked a great number of inanimate objects under the distinctions of masculine and feminine. This is remarkably the case in the Greek and Latin languages, which admit this capricious assignation of sex to inanimate objects, from no other principle than the casual structure of those languages, which refer to a certain gender, words of a certain termination; yet even termination does not always govern this distribution into masculine and feminine, but many nouns in those languages are classed, where all of them ought to have been classed, under the neuter gender.

2. In the French and Italian tongues, the neuter gender is wholly unknown; and all their names of inanimate objects are put upon the same footing with living creatures, and distributed, without exception, into masculine and feminine.

3. In the English language, there obtains a peculiarity quite opposite. In the English, when we use common discourse, all substantive nouns, that are not names of living creatures, are neuter without exception. *He, she, it,* are the marks of the three genders; and we always use *it,* in speaking of any object where there is no sex, or where the sex is not known. In this respect, our own language is pre-eminently philosophical in the application of its genders, or of those words which mark the real distinctions of male and female. Yet the genius of the language permits us, whenever it will add beauty to our discourse, to make the names of inanimate objects masculine or feminine in a metaphorical sense; and when we do so, we are understood to quit the literal style, and to use what is termed a figure of speech. By this means, we have it in our power to vary our style at pleasure. By making a very slight alteration, we can personify any object we choose to introduce with dignity; and by this change of manner, we give warning that we are passing, from the strict and logical, to the ornamental, rhetorical style.

4. Of this advantage, not only every poet, but every good writer and speaker in prose, avails himself; and it is an advantage peculiar to our own tongue; no other language possesses it. Every word in other languages has one fixed gender, masculine, feminine, or neuter, which cannot on any occasion be changed: αρετο for instance, in Greek; *vertus* in Latin; and *la vertu* in French; are uniformly feminine. *She* must always be the pronoun answering to the word, whether you be writing in poetry or in prose, whether you be using the style of reasoning, or that of declamation; whereas, in English, we can either express ourselves with the philosophical accuracy of giving no gender to things inanimate; or, by giving them gender, and transforming them into *persons,* we adapt them to the style of poetry, and, when it is proper, we enliven prose.

5. On this general principle, we give the masculine gender to those substantive nouns used figuratively, which are conspicuous for the attributes of imparting or communicating; which are by nature strong and efficacious, either to good or evil, or which have a claim to some eminence, whether laudable or not. Those again we make feminine, which are conspicuous for the attributes of containing and of bringing forth, which have more of the passive in their nature, than of the active; which are peculiarly beautiful or amiable; or which have respect to such excesses, as are rather feminine than masculine.

57. ARTICLES are little words prefixed to substantives, or to other parts of speech, used as substantives, to enlarge or circumscribe their meaning.

Illus. 1. When we survey any object we never saw before, or speak about an object with which we are not intimately acquainted, the first thing which we do to distinguish or ascertain it, is, to refer to its species, or to class it with some other objects of its species, of which we have some knowledge. *(Art. 49. Illus.)*

Example. We would say, *a tree, a house, a horse, a man,* when we wished to denote any individual of these classes which we had never seen before, and of which, from its appearance, we knew nothing, but its species. These objects are individuals of the species called *trees, horses, houses,* or *men;* and must therefore possess the common qualities of their respective species. *(Art. 50. Illus.)*

2. But, on surveying the same objects a second time, and recollecting our former acquaintance with them, or their own particular properties, we would not express our sentiments of them in the same language, in which we did at first. Besides referring them to their species, we would now signify the additional ideas of having formerly seen them, and of having been made acquainted with their nature, or distinction; and would therefore employ the following phraseology: *the* tree, *the* house, *the* horse, *the* man.

Corol. 1. The article *a* is called indefinite, because it refers the object to its species only, and denotes our conceptions of it no further than the common qualities of the species extend.

2. The article *the* is called definite, because it discriminates the object to which it is prefixed, from all others, of the same species, and denotes our previous acquaintance with it, or its own particular characteristics.

58. PRONOUNS are the class of words most nearly related to substantive nouns; being, as their name imports, representatives, or substitutes, of nouns.

Illus. *I*, *thou*, *he*, *she*, *it*, are pronouns, and they are no other than an abridged way of naming the persons or objects with which we have immediate intercourse, or to which, in discourse, we are frequently obliged to refer.

Corol. They are thence, with substantive nouns, subject to the same modifications of number, gender, and case.

Obs. 1. As the pronouns of the first and second person refer to persons who are present to each other when they speak, their sex must appear, and therefore needs not to be marked by a masculine or feminine *pronoun*. But as the third person may be absent, or unknown, the distinction of gender there becomes necessary; and accordingly, in English, the third person hath all the three genders belonging to it; *he*, *she*, *it*.

2. In English, most of our grammarians hold the personal pronouns to have two cases, besides the nominative; a possessive or genitive, and an accusative—*I*, *mine*, *me*; *thou*, *thine*, *thee*; *he*, *his*, *him*; *who*, *whose*, *whom*; *we*, *ours*, *us*; *ye*, *yours*, *you*; *they*, *theirs*, *them*.

59. ADJECTIVES, or terms of quality, such as *great*, *little*, *black*, *white*, are the plainest and simplest of all that class of words which are termed attributive. *(Art.* 44. *Corol.)*

Obs. 1. They are found in all languages; and, in all languages, must have been very early invented, as objects could not be distinguished from one another, nor could any intercourse be carried on concerning them, till names were given to their different qualities.

2. Between adjectives and participles there is no difference, except that the latter, along with their primary signification, denote the additional idea of time. Both serve to notify the qualities or attributes, and to define and illustrate the meaning of substantives.

3. All adjectives which denote qualities susceptible of augmentation or diminution, and almost all the qualities which are so, are susceptible of comparison.

4. Though the degrees of augmentation of which a quality is susceptible may be almost infinite, yet the framers of languages have been content with marking two stages only of these degrees.

5. By the former is signified that of two quantities compared, one is greater than the other; by the latter is understood, that of any larger number of qualities than two compared, one is the greatest among them.

6. The ancient languages express their degrees of comparison, chiefly by adding terminations to the adjectives; the modern languages incline more to signify them by auxiliary words.

60. The VERB is by far the most complex of the whole class of words which are called attributive. The chief characteristic of the verb is action or energy. The combination of ideas which it is thence employed to express, unavoidably renders it the most intricate of all the parts of speech.

Corol. Verbs, therefore, from their importance and necessity in speech, must have been coeval with men's first attempts towards the formation of language. (*Art.* 54.)

61. Of the various circumstances which must be communicated by the word denoting action, the chief refer to time and manner.

Illus. In relating an action it is requisite to notify whether it is finished, is finishing, or will be finished. And it is no less important to communicate also the manner in which the action has been performed, is performing, or will be performed. Whether the agent operated with deliberation, confidence and resolution, or with embarrassment, hesitation, and suspicion; whether he commanded the performance of the action, or signified only his inclination that it should be performed.

Corol. Hence arose the necessity that the verb along with the signification of action, should likewise express time, and that, with the signification of action and time, it should also denote manner. Here, then, we find the origin of moods and tenses.

62. As it was necessary that the circumstances of time and manner should attend the signification of action; the next important step in the formation of language, was, to determine by what means this combined communication should be accomplished.

Illus. One of two methods, it seems, must have been adopted; either to vary the terminations of the verb, or to conjoin with it auxiliary words, so as to convey these additional circumstances. The former of these methods, with a mixture of the latter, in the passive form of their verbs, was employed by the Greeks and Romans. The latter method, with a mixture of the former, in the active form of their verbs, has been adopted by the English, the French, and the Italians.

63. The structure of the verb was rendered still more complicated, because it was found requisite that along with the signification of action, time, and manner, it should also denote person and number, to adapt it for corresponding with the persons and numbers of nouns and pronouns with which it might be connected.

Obs. To combine so many important articles in *one word*, required a degree of ingenuity, which nothing could supply but the discernment and experience of ages.

64. Experience, doubtless, proved that the division of time into present, past, and future, was not sufficient for the purposes of communication.

Illus. 1. The fleeting nature of present time made any subdivision of it both difficult and unnecessary; hence, all polished languages have, in any mood, one tense only appropriated to express present time.

2. A similar opinion seems to have guided the construction of languages for expressing future time, which, including a long duration, was divisible into parts; but the total ignorance in which mankind are involved concerning actions that may take place in that period, must have divested them of all disposition to mark differences of future time, or to provide language with tenses for that purpose. Hence, all polished languages, except the Greek, have also been contented with one tense expressive of future time. The *paulo post futurum* of the Greeks is a specimen of their ingenuity to cultivate and improve their language, rather than as requisite for the communication of knowledge, since by this tense they intended to signify that the action was future, but would not be long so, because the time of its execution would quickly arrive.

3. The past, then, is the time which the framers of all languages have been chiefly anxious to subdivide. Most of the actions which could be the subject of discourse or writing, must have taken place in past time; and to render the accounts of them more conspicuous and intelligible, it must often have been requisite to specify the progress, or stages of their execution. Hence the various divisions of past time, and the different tenses significant of them with which all languages, even the most imperfect, abound. Of polished languages, the least complete, in this respect, have three divisions:

First, a *pluperfect tense*, by which is signified that the action is finished, and that some time has intervened since it was completed.

Secondly, a *perfect*, which denotes that the action is finished, but that very little, or no time has elapsed since its completion.

Thirdly, an *imperfect*, which signifies that the action had been going on but had not been completed. The language of ancient Rome possessed only these tenses significant of past time.

4. But the Greek language, the English, and the French, besides these tenses, employ another, which the Greeks called an *Aorist*, and which denotes only that the action is completed, without distinguishing in what division of past time the completion took place, or whether the execution was pluperfect, perfect, or imperfect.

5. In the usual course of speaking and writing, this state of an action frequently occurs; and, therefore, a tense adapted to express it, is of singular convenience and advantage. When the completion of the action is the only circumstance of consequence to be communicated, the proper tense to be employed is the *Aorist*. The Latin language hath its ambiguous *amavi*, but the sense of the context only enables the learner or the reader to discover whether it denotes the aorist ἐφίλησα, *j'aimai*, I loved; or the perfect past πεφίληκα, *j'ai aimé*, I have loved.

65. The use of moods is to denote the manner in which an action is performed, together with the dispositions and feelings entertained by the agent relative to its performance.

Illus. 1. The capital views of an action relative to manner or mood, refer either to its actual performance, or to the power, inclination, or obligation of the agent to perform it; or to the authority or right of the agent to entreat or command the performance; or, finally, to the exhibition of the action, without any consideration of the agent, or of the sentiments that he may entertain concerning the performance.

2. These circumstances comprehend every general view of an action, that human affairs can well be supposed to suggest. For,

First, the agent may either possess power, inclination, or obligation, to perform the action, and actually perform it.

Or, *Secondly*, he may possess power, inclination, or obligation to perform the action, and without being able to put them in execution.

Or, *Thirdly*, he may have a right, or authority, to entreat or command the power or inclination of some other agent to perform the action.

Or, *Finally*, the situation of the action may require only its bare exhibition, without any regard to the capacity, the duty, or the performance of the agent.

Corol. Hence, from these views, we readily discern the origin of the four moods of verbs commonly employed by polished languages.

1. The *indicative* denotes the actual performance of the action.

2. The *subjunctive* expresses the power, inclination, or obligation of the agent to perform the action, but leaves the performance to be decided by circumstances not yet come into existence; on account of which it is called the *conditional mood.*

3. The *imperative* exhibits the agent as entreating or commanding the performance of the action.

4. The *infinitive* represents the action in general, without connection with any agent, or reference to him, or any powers or dispositions depending upon him.

Illus. 1. *I write* is an indicative assertion, because it denotes an action in actual performance.

2. *I may write* is subjunctive, because it denotes disposition or capacity only, and communicates nothing with respect to performance.

3. *I have written* is indicative, because it denotes performance already past.

4. *I might have written* is subjunctive, because it communicates part, capacity, inclination, or obligation, but signifies nothing about performance.

5. *Write thou* is an imperative, because it does not necessarily infer performance, and imports nothing more than that the action of writing should be performed.

66. *Theory of moods.* In the present and past tenses, therefore, the indicative denotes performance;—the subjunctive, intention or disposition;—the imperative is susceptible of no time but the present, when it also expresses dis-

position. But, in respect of future time, even the indicative cannot denote performance; and the subjunctive must be destitute of this tense altogether.

Illus. 1. For, as an action can have no real existence, till the time of its execution arrive; so language can express nothing concerning it, but the present views and dispositions of the agents, who may foretell performance, or promise to perform. *I shall write* is significant only of prediction or intention, the execution of which must be future; and therefore, in the future tense, the indicative approaches the nature of the subjunctive and imperative, and expresses chiefly disposition. The main difference between them seems to be this, that the future of the indicative, along with the signification of disposition, conveys something positive or affirmative with regard to execution. If the two other moods imply at all the execution of the dispositions which they denote, they hold it forth as altogether contingent or conditional.

2. All the sentiments which can exist, or be expressed, relative to future actions, must refer either to the views of them which the agent formerly entertained, or now indulges. Of the appearances which these actions will assume when they come into existence, or of the sentiments which will be entertained concerning them, he can know nothing; and, therefore, these appearances and sentiments, can neither be the subjects of thought nor of language. Hence, since past and present intentions and dispositions are the only circumstances with which we either are or can be acquainted, it is evident that a mood, limited to express intention and disposition, cannot admit a future tense, because no ideas of future intentions and dispositions exist in the mind of man, which it may communicate.

3. The tense *I shall have loved*, commonly called "the future of the the subjunctive," has no participation with the usual import of the other tenses of that mood; for it is expressive of no sentiment that is future and conditional as to its execution, but is equally positive and affirmative with *I shall love*, the tense commonly called the future of the indicative. They both signify intention relative to future action; and the only difference between them is, that, taking the execution of both to refer to some fixed point of time, the action of the former *will be finished*, when the action of the latter *will be finishing*.

67. THIS THEORY of the moods, then, gives to the indicative seven tenses, and to the subjunctive not more than four.

Illus. 1. The indicative will exhibit PESENT TIME, denoted by the tenses *present*, and *perfect present;* as, *I love, I have loved*—φιλέω, πεφιληκα—*amo, amavi:* PAST TIME, by the *imperfect* and *pluperfect* tenses, *I was loving, I had loved*—ἐφιλεον, ἐπεφιληκειν—*amabam, amaveram*. FUTURE TIME, by the tenses styled *the future of the indicative*, and *the future of the subjunctive, I shall love, I shall have loved*—φιλησω, φιλησομι—*amabo, amavero:* and the whole of past time denoted by the Aorist, *I loved*—ἐφιλησα.

2. The subjunctive will exhibit PRESENT TIME, divided into *present* and *perfect present;* as, *I may love, I may have loved*—φιλῶ, πεφιληκω—*amem, amaverim;* and PAST TIME divided into *perfect* and *pluperfect, I could love, I could have loved*—*amarem, amavissem*.

68. Tenses and moods, in the Greek and Latin languages, are generally discriminated by different inflexions of the verb; in the modern languages they are chiefly denoted by AUXILIARIES.

Illus. 1. The auxiliaries of the indicative mood are, *have*, *had*, *shall*, *will*.

Have and *had* mark time; the former denoting that the action is finished just now; the latter that some interval has elapsed since it was completed.

Shall and *will* express futurity, but with it some affection or disposition of the agent. Thus, in the first person, *shall* barely foretells, or predicts performance; as, *I shall walk;* "hereafter I am to perform the action of walking." *Will* implies promise or engagement; *I will walk;* "I am determined hereafter to walk." In the second and third persons, these auxiliaries exchange their additional significations; and *shall* denotes promise or engagement; as, *thou shalt read: will* expresses futurity; as, *he will run:* that is to say, according to promise or engagement, "thou shalt read;" and "he will hereafter run."

2. The auxiliaries of the PRESENT of the subjunctive are *may* and *can;* and of the PERFECT, *might*, *could*, *would*, *should*.

May and *can* denote capacity or ability; as, *I may write, I can read*. *Might* and *could*, express the perfect time of *may* and *can;* and like them are significant of ability or capacity; but the execution depends on circumstances which have not yet come into existence. Thus, "I might see him," and "I could tell him," express that my capacity *to see* and *tell* him is complete, and I only wait for an opportunity to put it in action.

Would denotes inclination, *should* obligation, but the performance hangs upon some incident, or power, not under the controul of the agent; as, "I would read, if I had a book;" "I should walk, if I had leave."

3. The auxiliary *to be*, usually called a *substantive verb*, because it is confined to the signification of existence only, is generally and naturally an auxiliary of the passive form of the verb. In this case it is always attended with the perfect participle of the same form; as, "*I am* loved,"—"I have *been* loved,"—"I shall *be* loved." But added to the present participle of the active form, and supported by the other auxiliaries, there is not a mood or tense of the active form of the verb, which *to be* may not denote; as, "I *am* loving,"—"I may *be* loving,"—"*Be* thou loving,"—"*To be* loving," are expressions equivalent to, I love, I may love, love thou, to love.

69. The INFINITIVE MOOD requires no agent to be prefixed or understood in the form of a nominative. The infinitive, thus disengaged from all connexion with person or number, and significant of action in general, without consideration of any agent, approaches the nature of a substantive noun, and in all languages is frequently substituted in its place. The infinitive farther, used as a substantive, is nearly equivalent to the present participle, employed in the same manner.

Example. Thus, *to hear*, is nothing more than *the action of hearing*; and every such participle, in English, may be converted into a substantive, by prefixing one of the articles, the usual characteristics of substantives. *(Art. 57.)*

Obs. 1. The occasions on which it is requisite to express action without reference to any agent, are very numerous, and the use of the infinitive is, of course, very frequent. Its relation to the other moods is similar to that of abstract substantives to the adjectives from which they are formed; as, *goodness* from "good." *(Art. 59. Obs. 2.)* But *good* denotes a quality inherent in the particular substance to which it is applied; and *goodness* expresses a quality common to all the substantives to which it is competent to apply the adjective.

2. In like manner, the finite moods exhibit always some action, performed by an agent, either specified or understood, as the nominative to the verb. The infinitive denotes the action, without reference to any particular agent; but the action is practicable only by the agents who may be made nominatives to the finite moods.

Thus, as *goodness* denotes a quality common to all objects that are *good;* so *to read* denotes an action which can be performed by all agents who have learned *letters.*

3. The infinitive also, like the participle, retains so much of its verbal quality, in denoting action, as to be susceptible of time; and it possesses variations to express the three great divisions of *past*, *present*, and *future.* It seldom, however, introduces a sentence, but depends most commonly on some verb that precedes it; hence, the time which it assumes, is to be reckoned from that of the antecedent verb.

4. Taking, then, the time of the antecedent verb, as a fixed point, in computing the time of the infinitive, we employ the present, the past, or the future tense, according as the action which it denotes happens to be the same, of prior, or of posterior time, to that of the antecedent verb; as, "I am happy to see him,"—"I am happy to have seen him,"—"I am happy to be about to see him."

70. Of the adverb. The chief use of the adverb, as its name imports, is to modify the verb. The circumstances of action, expressed by tenses and moods, are all of a nature too general, to be sufficient for the purposes of communication. It is often necessary to be much more particular in ascertaining both the time and the manner, but particularly the place of the action. The important office of the adverb, is to accomplish these ends.

Illus. 1. Though tenses display a great degree of ingenuity in their formation, they rarely descend farther than to denote performance in past, present, or future time. But we find it necessary to be often much more minute, and to signify whether the action was done yesterday, lately, long ago; or is to be done now, immediately, instantly; or will be done quickly, presently, hereafter; or will be repeated often, seldom, daily, once, twice, thrice.

2. All the circumstances communicated by moods are of a very general nature. The indicative expresses performance only; the subjunctive and imperative denote bare intention or disposition; while the infinitive scarcely descends farther than the name of the action, without specifying its nature.

3. The very varied and numerous situations of society, demanded the signification of many circumstances of action much more particular; and to express these, a large class of adverbs was devised.

These adverbs indicate quality and manner, either simply, as *wisely, prudently, cautiously;* or positively, as *truly, certainly, unquestionably;* or contingently, as *perhaps, probably, possibly;* or negatively, as *no, not, erroneously;* or conjointly, as *together, generally, universally;* or separately, as *apart, solely, solitarily.* Sometimes they denote magnitude, as *wholly, altogether, exceedingly;* or comparison, as *preferable;* or passion, as *angrily, lovingly, furiously, valiantly;* or merit, as *learnedly, prudently, industriously.*

4. The circumstances of action relative to place are imparted by another copious class of adverbs. The principal views which they exhibit are, whether the action is performed in a place, or in moving to it, through it, or from it. Of the first sort are *here, there, where, within, without;* of the second, *hither, thither,* and the compounds of the syllable *ward,* as *toward, forward, backward, upward, downward;* of the third, *nowhere, elsewhere, everywhere;* of the fourth, *hence, whence, thence.*

5. Of the adverbs which signify time and manner, two, one from each class, often attend on the same verb, by an analogy similar to the appearance of every verb, both in a tense and a mode, on the same occasion. The adverb significant of time is generally placed before the verb, and after it is placed the adverb significant of manner. That which precedes circumscribes the time expressed by the tense, and that which follows limits the manner expressed by the mood.

6. Adverbs are susceptible of comparison, sometimes regular, as *soon, sooner, soonest;* but oftener irregular, as *readily, more readily, most readily.* One adverb is frequently employed to qualify another, as *too confidently, very seldom.* And, finally, they are often applied to circumscribe adjectives, as *unmercifully severe, highly criminal, superlatively excellent.*

71. PREPOSITIONS are words prefixed to substantives, to denote the various relations which they bear to one another.

Illus. In English they are generally monosyllabic words, chiefly employed to supply the deficiency of the inflections commonly called *cases.* But in the Welsh language they undergo inflection with the cases of nouns. In English they occasionally lend their aid to furnish compounded verbs, as *foretell, undervalue;* and in all cases they act as proportional ingredients of composition, by adding to it the full import of their powers.

72. CONJUNCTIONS are used to connect single substantives, clauses of sentences, or members of periods.

Illus. Conjunctions are divided into various classes, copulative, disjunctive, and adversitive; but their most useful distinction relates to the correspondence which they have to one another in different clauses or members of a period; and in the right management of which, both the perspicuity and propriety of language are not a little concerned.

Obs. We sometimes find pronouns connecting sentences as well as

conjunctions; and the latter not unfrequently, by a violent ellipsis, performing the substantive office of the former; but in this case the conjunction is usually connected with an indefinite relative, as "Let *such as* presume," for "Let *them who* presume."

73. INTERJECTIONS indicate those impressions which so suddenly and violently affect the mind of the speaker or writer, as to burst asunder the regular train of his thoughts and expressions, and thence demand immediate utterance.

Obs. This definition demonstrates that the proper use of these words must be extremely limited; and experience proves that the incidents which excite such vehement agitation are not very common. *(Art. 4. Corol.)*

Illus. Interjections are sparingly used even in the glowing and animated languages of antiquity; and they appear less seldom with grace, in the more tame and phlegmatic tongues of modern times. They rarely occur with us but when they interrupt, not language, but silence; and there are few persons who court those seasons of high passion when their sentiments are too violent for communication by words, and with difficulty admit utterance, at intervals, by sighs and groans.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE USE WHICH GIVES LAW TO LANGUAGE.

74. ELOQUENCE has a particular connexion with language, as its intention is to convey our sentiments into the minds of others, in order to produce upon them a determinate effect; and language is the only vehicle by which this conveyance can be made.

Corol. The art of speaking, then, is not less necessary to the orator than the art of thinking. Without the latter the former could not have existed. Without the former, the latter would be ineffectual. And the operations of the latter go on by means of words, for there is no evidence that we think without language.

75. LANGUAGE is mainly a species of *fashion*,* in which, by the general but tacit consent of the people of a particular state or country, certain sounds come to be appropriated to certain things, as their signs, and certain ways of inflecting and combining those sounds come to be established, as denoting the relations which subsist among the things signified. *(Chap. I. Book I. and Chap. I. Book II.)*

Illus. 1. The philosophical view which we have taken of the chief

* Campbell Phil. of Rhet. b. ii. c. 1.

principles and component parts of speech, *(Art.* 48. *Obs.)* shew us plainly it is not the business of grammar to give law to the fashions which regulate our speech. From its conformity to these it derives its authority and value.

2. Grammar, therefore, is nothing else than a collection of general observations methodically digested, and comprising all the modes previously and independently established, by which the significations, derivations, and combinations of words in that language, are ascertained. For, these modes and fashions have no sooner obtained and become general, than they are the laws of the language, and the grammarian's only business is, to note, collect, and methodize them.

3. But this truth concerns alike those comprehensive analogies and rules, which affect *whole classes* of words, and *every individual* word, in the inflecting or combining of which, a particular mode hath prevailed.

Corol. Hence, every single anomaly, though departing from the rule assigned to the other words of the same class, and on that account called an exception, stands on the same basis, on which the rules of the tongue are founded, custom having prescribed for it a separate rule. *(Art.* 52 *and* 53.*)*

76. Use or the *custom of speaking*, is, then, the sole original standard of conversation, as far as respects the expression; and the *custom of writing* is the chief standard of style. *(Art.* 86. *Illus.)*

Corol. In every grammatical controversy, we are, consequently, as a last resort, entitled to appeal from the laws and the decisions of the grammarians, to *the tribunal of use*, as to the supreme authority. *(Art.* 79. *Illus.)*

Obs. 1. The conduct of our ablest grammarians proves that this order of subordination ought never, on any account, to be reversed.

2. But if use be of such consequence in this matter, before advancing any farther, let us endeavour to ascertain precisely what it is, as it would otherwise be erroneous to agree about the name, while we differed about the notion that we assigned to it.

77. REPUTABLE USE, sometimes called *general use*, implies, not only *currency* but *vogue*, and may be defined, whatever modes of speech are authorised as good by the writings of a great number, if not the majority of celebrated authors: it is properly *reputable custom*. *(Art.* 80. *Illus. and* 86. *Obs.* 2.*)*

Illus. The good use of language has the approbation of those who have not themselves attained it. It is the fate of those who, by reason of their poverty and other circumstances, are deprived of the advantages of education, to hear words of which they know not the meaning, and consequently to produce and misapply them. An affectation of imitating their superiors, is, then, the great source of those errors of the illiterate, in respect of conversation and the application of words, which are beyond their sphere.

78. VULGARISMS are those terms and phrases which, notwithstanding a pretty uniform and extensive use, are con-

sidered as corrupt, and like counterfeit money, though common, not valued.

Illus. Their use is not reputable, because we associate with them such notions of meanness as suit those orders of men among whom chiefly the use is found. If we use them we do not approve them, and negligence alone suffers them to creep into our conversation or writing, except when they are put into the mouths of characters whom we are describing.

Corol. Their currency, therefore, is without authority and without weight.

79. We always take the sense of the terms and phrases belonging to any elegant or mechanical art from the practice of those who are conversant in that art; in like manner, from the practice of those who have had a liberal education, and are, therefore, presumed to be best acquainted with men and things, we judge of the general use of language.

Illus. But in what concerns words themselves, their construction and application, authors of reputation are, by universal consent, in actual possession of that standard which is *authority;* as to this tribunal, to which all have access, when any doubt arises, the appeal is always made. *(Cor. Art.* 76.)

Corol. The source, therefore, of that preference which distinguishes good use from bad, in language, is a natural propensity of the human mind to believe, that those are the best judges of the proper signs of speech, and of their proper application, who understand best the things which they represent. *(Art.* 77. *and Illus.)*

80. AUTHORS of *reputation* have been chosen rather than *good* authors, for two reasons:

First, because it is more strictly conformable to the truth of the case. Though esteem and merit usually go together, it is solely the public esteem, and not their intrinsic merit, which raises AUTHORS to this distinction, and stamps a value on their language.

Secondly, this character is more determinate than the other, and therefore more extensively intelligible. Between two or more authors, as to the preference in point of merit, different readers will differ exceedingly, who agree perfectly as to the respective places which they hold in the favour of the public. Persons may be found of a taste so particular, as to prefer Parnel to Milton, but none will dispute the superiority of the latter in point of fame.

Illus. By authors of reputation, we mean, not only in regard to knowledge, but as respects the talent of communicating that knowledge. There are writers who, as concerns the first, have been deservedly valued by the public, but who, on account of a supposed deficiency in respect of the second, are considered of no authority in language. We of course suppose that their writings are in the English tongue, in

all the various kinds of composition, in prose and verse, serious and ludicrous, grave and familiar.

81. NATIONAL USE presents itself in a twofold view, as it stands opposed to *provincial* and to *foreign.* (*Art.* 85. *and* 88.)

Illus. Every province has its peculiarities of dialect, which affect not merely the pronunciation and accent, but even the inflection and combination of words. It is thus that the idiom of one district, is distinguished, both from that of the nation, and from that of every other province. The narrowness of the circle to which the currency of the words and phrases of such dialects is confined, sufficiently discriminates them from that which, commanding a circulation incomparably wider, is properly styled the language of the country.

Corol. Hence, we derive one reason, why the term *use*, on this subject, is commonly accompanied with the epithet *general.* (*Art.* 79.)

82. The ENGLISH LANGUAGE, properly so called, is found current, especially in the upper and middle ranks of life, over the whole British Empire.

Illus. Thus, though the people of one province ridicule the idiom of another province, they all vail to the English idiom, and scruple not to acknowledge its superiority over their own.

84. Of all the idioms subsisting among us, that to which we give the character of *purity*, is the most prevalent, though the language be not universally spoken or written with orthographical and grammatical purity.

Corol. The faulty idioms do not jar more with true English than they do with one another, and their diversity, therefore, subjects them to the denomination of *impure.*

84. *Professional dialects,* or the cant which is sometimes observed to prevail among those of the same handicraft, or way of life, must be considered, with little variation, in the same light with provincial dialects. (*Art.* 81. *Illus.*)

Illus. The currency of the former cannot be so exactly circumscribed as that of the latter, whose distinction is purely local; but their use is not on that account either more extensive or more reputable. Thus: *advice*, in the commercial idiom, means "information," or "intelligence;"---*nervous*, in open defiance of analogy, denotes, in the medical sense, "having weak nerves;"---and the word *turtle*, though pre-occupied time immemorial by a species of dove, is employed by sailors and gluttons, to signify "a tortoise."

85. NATIONAL USE, as opposed to *foreign*, is too evident to need illustration; for the introduction of extraneous words and idioms, from other languages and foreign nations, cannot be a smaller transgression against the established custom of the English tongue, than the introduction of words and idioms peculiar to some counties or shires of

England, or at least somewhere current within the British pale.

Obs. The only material difference between them is, that the one is more usually the error of the learned, the other of the unlearned. But if, in this view, the former is entitled to greater indulgence, from respect paid to learning; in another light, it is entitled to less, from its being more commonly the result of affectation.

Corol. Thus, two essential qualities of usage, in regard to language, have been settled, that it be both *reputable* and *national*.

86. PRESENT USE is that which falls within the knowledge or remembrance of men now living, and which, in fact, regulates our style. *(Art. 76.)*

Illus. 1. If present use is to be renounced for ancient, it will be necessary to determine at what precise period of antiquity, we are to obtain our rules of language. But one might be inclined to remove the standard to the distance of a century and a half, while another may, with as good reason, fix it three centuries backwards, and another six. Now as the language of any one of these periods, if judged by the use of any other, would, no doubt, be found entirely barbarous; either the *present use* must be the *standard* of the present language, or the language does not admit of any standard; but experience proves, that critics have not the power of reviving at pleasure old fashioned terms, inflections, and combinations, and of making such alterations on words, as will bring them nearer to what they suppose to be the etymon; and hence we infer, that there is no other dictator here but use. Nor will it ever be the arbitrary rules of any man, or body of men whatever, that will ascertain the language; yet words are by no means to be accounted the worse for being old, if they are not obsolete; neither is any word the better for being new. On the contrary, the sovereign dominion of custom over language, evinces, that some time is absolutely necessary to constitute that custom or use, on which the establishment of words depends. Yet it is certain, that when we are in search of precedents for any word or idiom, there are certain mounds, over which we cannot leap with safety. The authority of Hooker or of Raleigh, how great soever their fame be, will not now be admitted in support of a term or expression, not to be found in any good writer of a later date.

2. But the boundary must not be fixed at the same date in every species of composition. Poetry, which hath ever been allowed a wider range than prose, enjoys, in this respect, a singular indulgence, to compensate for the peculiar restraints which she is laid under by the measure. And this indulgence is fraught with a two-fold advantage; convenience to the poet, and gratification to the reader. Diversity in the style relieves the ear, which hath little delight from sameness of metre. But still there are limits to this diversity. The authority of Milton and Waller remains unquestioned; and our best poets of the present day rarely venture to introduce words or phrases, of which no example could be produced, since the times of Spencer or Shakespeare.

3. And even in prose, the bounds are not the same for every kind of composition. In matters of science, for example, the terms of which, from the nature of the subject, are not capable of such accuracy as those which belong to ordinary compositions, and are within the reach

of ordinary readers, there is no necessity of confining an author within a narrow circle. But in composing pieces which come under this last denomination, as history, romance, travels, moral essays, familiar epistles, and the like, it is safest for an author to consider those words and idioms as obsolete, which have been disused by all good writers, for a longer period than that to which the age of man extends.

Obs. 1. The expressions, *recent use*, and *modern use*, have been purposely avoided, because they seem opposed to what is *ancient;* and the word *present* has been chosen, because, in respect of place, it is opposed to *absent*, and in respect of time, to *past* or *future*, which have now no existence. When, therefore, the phrase *present use* occurs in this volume, its proper contrary is—*obsolete*, not ancient.

2. Though we have acknowledged language to be a species of *fashion* or *mode*, as doubtless it is ;* yet being much more permanent than those things to which the words *fashionable* and *modish* are applied, the former phrases are not meant to convey the ideas of novelty and levity, but recur to the standard already assigned, *(Art. 77. Illus. and 80. Illus.)*; the writings of a plurality of celebrated authors. Thus have we established, as general principles,

I. That *use* is the sole mistress of language.

II. That her essential attributes are *reputable*, *national*, and *present*.

III. That grammar and criticism are but her ministers; and though, like other ministers, they would sometimes impose upon the people, the dictates of their own humour as the commands of their sovereign, they are not so often successful in such attempts, as to encourage the frequent repetition of them.

IV. That what has been said of the English, applies to every tongue whatever; it is founded in use or custom,

> - - - - Whose arbitrary sway,
> Words and the forms of language, must obey.†

And, V. That it is not by ancient, but by present use, that the style of every language must be regulated.

CHAPTER III.

THE NATURE AND USE OF VERBAL CRITICISM, WITH ITS PRINCIPAL RULES OR CANONS, BY WHICH, IN ALL OUR DECISIONS, WE OUGHT TO BE DIRECTED.

87. ALL the various qualities of elocution, have their foundation in PURITY, and the great standard of purity is *use*. *(Art. 76, 77. and 86.)*

* "Phil. of Rhet." vol. i. book ii. chap. 1.

† - - - - - - - - - Usus
Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.
Hor. de Arte Poet.

Obs. 1. The essential properties of *use*, as regarding language, have been considered and explained in the preceding chapter; and in this we purpose to establish certain *canons* or *rules*, whereby the student may be enabled to detect the fallacy of that fluent and specious, but superficial method, of verbal criticism, which passes current for a deliberate examination, into the principles on which the structure and genius of our language are built. *(Illus.* 1. *Art.* 86.)

2. Grammar and criticism, though in a different sphere, are of similar benefit to language, that a succinct, perspicuous, and faithful digest of the laws of the Empire is to society, in comparison of the labyrinths of statutes, reports, and opinions, which have emanated, through a long succession of ages, from legislators, counsellors and judges. *(III. p.* 55.)

3. The grammarian compiles the laws, which custom gives to language; the critic seasonably brings before the public tribunal the abuses of innovation. The one facilitates the study of our native tongue, advances general use into universal, and gives at least a greater stability, if not a permanency, to custom, the most mutable and capricious thing in nature; the other, stigmatizing every unlicensed term, and improper idiom, teaches us to suppress them, and to give greater precision, and consequently more perspicuity and beauty to our style. *(Obs.* 1. *and* 2. *Art.* 76.)

88. GOOD USE, which, for brevity's sake, shall hereafter include reputable, national, and present use, is not always uniform in her decisions.

Illus. 1. Whenever a considerable number of authorities can be produced in support of two different, though resembling modes of expression, for the same thing, there is always a divided use, and he who conforms to either side, cannot be said to speak barbarously, or to oppose the usage of the language. *(Art.* 80. *and Illus.)*

89. This DIVIDED USE hath place sometimes in *single words*, sometimes in *constructions*, and sometimes in *arrangement*. In all such cases, there is scope for choice; and it belongs, without question, to the critical art, to lay down the principles, by which, in all doubtful cases, our choice should be directed. *(Art.* 76. *Corol.)*

Illus. 1. There are, indeed, some differences in single words, as *isle*, for "island," *mount*, for "mountain," which ought still to be retained. They are a kind of synonomies, and afford a little variety, without occasioning any inconvenience.

2. In our arrangement too, it certainly holds, that various manners suit various styles, as various styles suit various subjects, and various sorts of composition. For this reason, unless when some obscurity, ambiguity, or inelegance, is created, no disposition of words which hath obtained the public approbation, ought to be altogether rejected.

3. In construction, the case is somewhat different. Purity, perspicuity, and elegance, generally require, that in this there be the strictest uniformity. Yet differences here are not only allowable, but even convenient, when attended with correspondent differences in the application.

Corol. In those instances, therefore, of divided use, which give scope for option, the authorities on the opposite sides, in order to assist us in assigning the preference, ought to be equal, or nearly so. When those on one side greatly preponderate, it is in vain to oppose the prevailing usage. Custom, when wavering, may be swayed; but when reluctant, she will not be forced.

90. CANON THE FIRST. When use is divided as to any particular word or phrase, and the expression used by one part hath been pre-occupied, or is in any instance susceptible of a different signification, and the expression employed by the other part never admits a different sense, both perspicuity and variety require, that the form of expression be preferred, which, in every instance, is strictly univocal.

Examples. By consequence, meaning consequently, is preferable to "of consequence," as this expression is often employed to denote that which is momentous or important. *Besides* and *beside*, serve both as prepositions and conjunctions. Custom assigns to each a separate province; and good writers humour her, by employing only the former as a conjunction, and the latter as a preposition.

Obs. The improper use of adverbs for adjectives, and *vice versa*, offends against precision, and the authority of present use. In those verbs, also, which have for the participle passive, both the preterite form, and one peculiar, the peculiar form ought to have the preference. For the same reason, some are inclined to prefer that use which makes *ye*, invariably the nominative plural of the personal pronoun *thou*, and *you*, the accusative, when applied to an actual plurality. When used for the singular number, custom hath determined that it shall be *you* in both cases.

91. CANON THE SECOND. In doubtful cases, regard ought to be had, in our decisions, to the analogy of the language.

Examples. By this canon, *contemporary* is preferable to "cotemporary;" because in words compounded with the inseparable preposition *con*, the *n* is retained before a consonant, but expunged before a vowel, or *h* mute; as, *con-comitant*, *co-incide*, *co-heir*. *Co-partner* is, probably, the only exception. But in dubious cases, we are guided by the rule, not by the exception. The principle of analogy prefers *afterwards* and *homewards*, to "afterward" and "homeward;" and *would God*, is preferable to "would to God," though both these last phrases plead the authority of custom.

92. CANON THE THIRD. When the terms or expressions are, in other respects, equal, that ought to be preferred, which is most agreeable to the ear.

Obs. This rule hath perhaps a greater chance of being observed than any other, it having been, since the days of Addison, the general aim of our public speakers and writers, to avoid harsh and unmusical periods. Nay, a regard to sound hath, in some instances, controuled the public choice, to the prejudice of both the former canons, which, one would think, ought to be regarded as of more importance.

Example. Thus the term *ingenuity* hath obtained, in preference to

"ingeniousness," though the former cannot be deduced, analogically, from ingenious; and had, besides, been pre-occupied, and consequently would be equivocal, being a regular derivative from the term *ingenious*, if the newer acceptation had not, before now, entirely supplanted the other.

93. CANON THE FOURTH. In cases wherein none of the foregoing rules gives either side a foundation of preference, a regard to simplicity, in which we include etymology, when manifest, ought to determine our choice.

Obs. Under the name *simplicity*, we comprehend also *brevity;* for that expression is always the simplest, which, with equal purity and perspicuity, is the briefest.

Illus. We have several active verbs, which are used indiscriminately, either with or without a preposition; as *accept*, or *accept of;* but the simple form is preferable.

94. CANON THE FIFTH In the few cases wherein neither perspicuity nor analogy, neither sound nor simplicity, assists us in fixing our choice, it is safest to prefer that manner, which is most conformable to ancient usage.

Obs. This rule is founded on a very plain maxim—that in language, as in several other things, change itself, unless when it is clearly advantageous, is ineligible. On this principle, some writers follow the authority of Milton, in preferring that usage, which distinguishes *ye*, as the nominative plural of *thou*. *(Obs. Canon First.)*

Quotations from Shakespeare, on the side of orthography, are not much to be minded, because his editors have shamefully abused his ancient orthography.

95. Every thing favoured by *good use*, is not on that account worthy to be retained, though no term, idiom, or application, that is totally unsupported by her, can be admitted to be good.

Obs. This position is necessary in order to establish rules for ascertaining both the extent of the authority claimed by custom, and the rightful prerogatives of criticism.

Illus. 1. Though nothing can be good in language from which *use* withholds her approbation, there may be many things to which she gives it, that are not in all respects good, or such as are worthy to be retained and imitated. In some instances, *custom* may very properly be checked by *criticism*.

2. The latter enjoys a sort of negative, though not a censorian power of instant degradation. She hath the privilege of remonstrating, and, by means of this, when used discreetly, of bringing what is bad into disrepute, and so cancelling it gradually: but she hath no positive right to establish any thing.

3. Her power too is like that of eloquence; she operates on us purely by persuasion, depending for success on the solidity, or, at least, the speciousness of her arguments; whereas custom hath an unaccountable and irresistible influence over us—an influence which is

prior to persuasion, and independent of it, nay, sometimes even in contradiction to it.

96. Of different modes of expression, that which comes to be favoured by general practice, may be denominated best, because established; but it cannot always be said with truth, that it is established, because best.

Illus. 1. Time and chance have an influence on all things human, and on nothing more remarkably than on language; and the best forms of speech do not always establish themselves by their own superior excellence; for we often see, that of various forms, those will recommend themselves, and come into general use, which, if abstractedly considered, are neither the simplest, nor the most agreeable to the ear, nor the most conformable to analogy.

2. Though of any expression, which has obtained the sanction of good use, we cannot properly say that it is barbarous, we must admit, that in other respects, it may be faulty. To get rid of those gross improprieties, which, though unauthorised by practice, ought to be discarded, nothing more is necessary than to disuse them. And to bring us to disuse them, both the example and the arguments of the critic have their weight.

3. The difference is obvious between the bare omission, or rather the not employing of what is used, and the introduction of what is unusual. The former, provided what you substitute in its stead be proper, and have the authority of custom, can never come under the observation, or at least the reprehension of the reader; whereas the latter shocks our ears immediately

Corol. 1. Here, therefore, lies one principal province of criticism, to point out the characters of those words and idioms which deserve to be disfranchised and consigned to perpetual oblivion. It is by carefully filing off all roughnesses and inequalities, that languages, like metals, must be polished. This indeed is an effect of *Taste*. But when criticism hath called forth to this object the attention of a people improving in arts and sciences, there is a probability that the effect will be accelerated, and that their speech will not only become richer and more comprehensive, but that it will become highly refined, by acquiring greater precision, perspicuity, and harmony. *(Art.* 31. *and* 32.*)*

2. It is, however, no less certain, on the other hand, that in the declension of taste and science, language will unavoidably degenerate; and though the critical art may retard a little, it will never be able ultimately to prevent this degeneracy.

Obs. As no term, idiom, or application that is totally unsupported by use, can be admitted to be good, the following *Canons*, in relation to those words or expressions, which may be thought to merit degradation from the rank which they have hitherto maintained, will enable us to ascertain whether every term, idiom, and application, that is countenanced by use, is to be esteemed good, and therefore worthy to be retained.

97. Canon the sixth. All words and phrases which are remarkably harsh and unharmonious, and not absolutely necessary, may justly be judged to merit degradation.

Definition. We call a word or phrase *absolutely necessary*, when, in the event of a dismission, we have none synonymous to supply its place, or in any way to convey properly the same idea, without the aid of circumlocution.

Obs. There are, however, criteria, by which we may discriminate the objectionable words from all others.

98. *Criterion first.* A term composed of words already compounded, of which the several parts are not easily, and therefore not closely united, is always heavy and drawling, and withal so ill compacted, that it has not more vivacity than a periphrasis, to compensate for the defect of harmony.

Example. Such are the words *bare-faced-ness, shame-faced-ness, unsuccess-ful-ness, dis-interest-ed-ness, wrong-headed-ness.*

99. *Criterion second.* When a word is so formed and accented, as to render it of difficult utterance to the speaker, and consequently disagreeable in sound to the hearer, it may be judged worthy of the fate prescribed by the canon. (*Art.* 97.)

Illus. This happens in two cases; first, when the syllables which immediately follow the accented syllable, are so crowded with consonants, as of necessity to retard the pronunciation; as *que'stionless, reme'mbrancer;*—secondly, when too many syllables follow the accented syllable, a similar dissonance is found; as, *pri'marily, per'emptorily.*

100. *Criterion third.* When a short or unaccented syllable is repeated, or followed by another short or unaccented syllable very much resembling it, the pronunciation partakes the appearance of stammering.

Example. This happens when we add the adverbial termination to words ending in *ly;* as *ho'li'ly;* or when the participial termination *ing*, is added to a noun ending in *er;* as, *fa'rriering, so'ldiering.*

Scholium. Beside the cases which come under the foregoing criterion, we know of none that ought to dispose us to the total disuse of words really significant. A little harshness by the collision of consonants, which, nevertheless, our organs find no difficulty in articulating, and which do not suggest to the hearer the disagreeable idea either of precipitation or of stammering, is by no means a sufficient reason for the suppression of an useful term. It does not do well to introduce hard and strong sounds too frequently; but when they are used sparingly and properly, they have even a good effect. Variety of sound is advantageous to a language; and it is convenient that we should have some sounds that are rough and masculine, as well as some that are liquid and feminine.*

* Those languages which are allowed to be the most susceptible of all the graces of harmony, have admitted many ill sounding words: such are in Greek τπλαγχνιζεσθαι. μεμιμημενον; such are also in Latin *spississimus percrebrescebantque:* and in Italian, *incrocicchiare, spregiatrice.* The first Greek word hisses worse than any

101. CANON THE SEVENTH. **When etymology plainly points to a signification different from that which the word commonly bears, propriety and simplicity both require the dismission of every such word.**

Illus. The word *plainly* is used in this canon, because no regard should be had to the etymology, when it is from an ancient or foreign language, or from obsolete roots in our own language, or when it is obscure or doubtful. The case is different, when the roots either are, or strongly appear to be, English, and, in present use, clearly suggest another meaning.

Example 1. *Beholden* implies "obliged," or "indebted." As the passive participle of the verb to behold, which it is analogically, it conveys a sense totally different. Not that we consider the term as equivocal; for in the last acceptation, it hath long since been disused, having been supplanted by *beheld*.

Corol. Every word, therefore, whose formation is as analogical as this, has, at least, the appearance of impropriety, when used in a sense that seems naturally foreign to its radical signification.

Example 2. The verb *to unloose* should analogically signify "to tie," in like manner as *to untie* signifies "to loose."

Corol. All considerations of analogy, propriety and perspicuity, unite in persuading us to repudiate the preposterous application of every term which includes the impropriety of conveying a sense, the reverse of that which its etymology naturally suggests.

102. CANON THE EIGHTH. **When any words become obsolete, or at least are never used, except as constituting parts of particular phrases, it is better to dispense with their service entirely, and give up the phrases.**

Illus. First, because the disuse, in ordinary cases, renders the term somewhat indefinite, and occasions a degree of obscurity; secondly, because the introduction of words, which never appear but with the same attendants, gives an air of vulgarity and cant, to a style which might otherwise be wholly unexceptionable.

Example. Dint of argument, for "strength of argument;"—*not a whit better*, for "no better;"—*pro* and *con*, for "on both sides;"—with many similar phrases, will never be used by those who observe the eighth canon.

103. CANON THE NINTH. **All those phrases which, when analysed grammatically, include a solecism, (*Art.* 111.) and all those to which use hath affixed a particular sense, but which, when explained by the general and established rules**

English word; the last presents a dissonant recurrence of the same letter, to a degree unexampled with us, though the mixture of long and short syllables prevents that difficulty of utterance, pointed out in the example of *Criterion third*. The first Latin word hisses in pronunciation like an adder roused from its slumbers; the second is as rough as any of those in the example of *Criterion first*. And the two Italian words, from the most musical of all languages, sound harsh and jarring even to us, who are accustomed to a dialect boisterous like our weather.

of language, are susceptible either of a different sense, or of no sense, ought to be discarded altogether.

Illus. We shall distinguish this phraseology by the epithet *idiomatical;* and since it is the offspring partly of ignorance, and partly of affectation, it divides itself into several examples.

First, that which includes a solecism, is the phrase, "I *had* rather *do* such a thing," for, "I would rather do it." This expression is irregular, because the auxiliary *had* joined to the infinitive active *do,* is a gross violation of the rules of conjugation; and it is unnecessary, because we can supply its place by a phrase purely English. Good use cannot therefore protect it from being branded with the name of a blunder.

Secondly. Phrases, which, when explained grammatically, lead to a different sense from what the words in conjugation commonly bear; as, "he sings a good song," for "he sings well." A good song may be ill sung, and therefore the plain meaning of the words, as they stand connected, is very different. So also, "he plays a good fiddle," for "he plays well on the fiddle," involves a solecism.

A fourth impropriety is, a *river's emptying itself.* But *to empty,* is "to exhaust," or "to evacuate." Now passing the word *river,* as a metonymy for *channel,* is this ever "evacuated or exhausted?" when it is, it ceases to be a channel, and becomes a *hollow* or *valley.* A river *falls* into the sea, and a ship "falls down the river," as the motion is no other than a fall down a real, though gentle, declivity.

The fifth sort are those vile but common phrases, which can scarcely be considered as conveying any sense; as, *currying favour, dancing attendance.*

Sixth. The idiomatical use that is sometimes made of certain verbs, renders their application reprehensible; as, "he *stands* upon security," for "he insists;"—and *take* for "understand;" as, "you *take* me," and "I *take* it;"—and *hold* for "continue;" as "he does not *hold* long in one mind."

Seventh. The worst are those, in which the words, when construed, are not susceptible of any meaning; as, "there were seven ladies in the company, every one prettier than another;" which means, that they were all very pretty. But *one prettier,* implies that there is another *less pretty.* Now where every one *is prettier,* there can be none *less,* and consequently none *more* pretty.

Corol. Ambitiously to display nonsensical phrases of this sort, under the ridiculous notion of a familiar and easy manner, is not to set off the riches of a language, but to expose its rags. As such idioms, therefore, err alike against purity, simplicity, perspicuity, and elegance, they are entitled to no quarter from those who may deem the foregoing canons of any weight in the art of composition.

Scholium. The first five of these canons are intended to suggest the principles by which our choice ought to be directed in cases wherein use itself is wavering; and the four last, to point out those further improvements of construction, which verbal criticism, without exceeding her legal powers, may assist in producing. There is a danger, however, lest our improvements this way be carried too far, and our mother tongue, by being too much impaired, be impoverished, and so more injured in copiousness and nerves, than all our refinement will ever be able to compensate. For this reason there ought, in sup-

port of every sentence of proscription, to be an evident plea from the principles of perspicuity, elegance and harmony.

104. The foregoing reasoning furnishes a TENTH CANON. Whatever be the opinion of some grammarians, the want of etymology cannot be reckoned a sufficient ground for the suppression of a significant term, which hath come into good use.

Obs. It were as unreasonable to reject, on this account, the assistance of an expressive word, that opportunely offers its service, when perhaps no other word would so exactly answer our purpose, as to refuse, in common life, the needful aid of a proper person, because he could give no account of his family or pedigree.

Illus. Though what is called *cant*, is generally, not necessarily, not always without etymology, it is not the defect, but the baseness of the use, which fixeth on it that disgraceful appellation. No absolute monarch hath it more in his power to ennoble a person of obscure birth, than it is in the power of good use to exalt words of low or dubious extraction.

Examples. *Fib*, *banter*, *fop*, *fudge*, have arisen from hovels no one knows how; and *flimsy*, from the cant of a workshop.

Corol. It is never from attention to etymology, which would frequently mislead us, but from custom, the only infallible guide in this matter, that the meanings of words in present use must be learned. *(Art. 76. and 77.)*

105. What has now been said on this topic, relates only to such words as bear no distinguishable traces of the baseness of their source; the case is quite different in regard to those terms, which may be said to proclaim their vile and despicable origin; and that either by associating disagreeable and unsuitable ideas, or by betraying some frivolous humour in their formation.

Examples. *Bellytimber*, *thorowstitch*, and *dumbfound*, are of the former; and *transmogrify*, *bamboozle*, *helterskelter*, are of the latter class. Yet most of these words are to be found in "WALKER'S *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*."

Obs. These may find a place in burlesque, but ought never to show themselves in any serious performance. A person of no birth, as the phrase is, may be raised to the rank of nobility, and, which is more, may become it; but nothing can add dignity to that man, or fit him for the company of gentlemen, who bears indelible marks of the clown in his look, gait, and whole behaviour.

CHAPTER IV.

OF GRAMMATICAL PURITY.

106. PURE ENGLISH composition implies three things: (*Art.* 87.)

First, that the words be English. (*Art.* 82.)

Secondly, that their construction, under which, in our tongue, arrangement also is comprehended, be in the English idiom. (*General Principles*, p. 55.)

Thirdly, that the words and phrases be employed to express the precise meaning, which custom hath affixed to them. (*Art.* 76.)

Obs. In the foregoing definition, we have substituted the phrase, "pure English," for *grammatical purity*; and this we have done for two especial reasons: 1st. Because it is the language in which we write; and 2dly. Because the language of Britain is capable of that grammatical purity, and those higher qualities of elocution, and oratorical excellence, which give grace and energy to discourse.

107. Since purity implies three things, it may be violated in three different ways:

First, the words may not be English.

This fault is denominated a *barbarism.*

Secondly, the construction of the sentence may not be in the English idiom.

This fault has gotten the name of *solecism.*

Thirdly, the words and phrases may not be employed to express the precise meaning, which custom hath affixed to them.

This fault is termed an *impropriety.**

108. The reproach of BARBARISM may be incurred in three different ways:—

1st. By the use of words entirely *obsolete:*

2dly. By the use of words entirely *new;* or

3dly. By *new formations* and *compositions,* from simple and primitive words in present use.

Illus. 1. *By the use of obsolete words.* Obsolete words are not now English, though they might have been so in the days of our forefathers. We cannot therefore introduce them. Foreign phrases have as much

* This distribution is agreeable to Quintilian. Instit. lib. i. cap. 5. "Deprehendat quæ barbara, quæ impropria, quæ contra legem loquendi composita."

claim to be introduced, as those antiquated words, without risking the charge of affectation. Thus, Thompson, in his "Castle of Indolence," has dragged from their obscurity many words which were almost wholly unknown, except in Spenser's "Fairie Queene."

Examples. *Anon, behest, fantasy, cleped, erst, uneath, whilom, tribulation, erewhile, whenas, peradventure, selfsame,* offend more or less against Article 86. and its illustration.

2. Poets claim exemption from this rule of never using any words but those which are English, particularly on account of the peculiar inconveniences to which the laws of versification subject them. (*Illus.* 2. *Art.* 86.)

3. Besides, in treating some topics, passages of ancient story, for instance, there may sometimes be found a suitableness in the introduction of old words.

4. In certain kinds of style, when used sparingly and with judgment, they serve to add the venerable air of antiquity to the narrative.

5. In burlesque also they often produce a good effect. But purity requires that those words only shall be employed which are of classical authority; and they who are ambitious to speak and write with elegance, will select as their guides, in conversation and oratory, speakers of the best elocution, and authors of the most correct taste, solid matter, and refined manner, will form their patterns in writing. Classical authority, the standard by which our practice must be regulated, is none other than the example of such speakers and writers. (*Art.* 80. *Illus.*)

109. *The use of new words* inundates a language with a numerous tribe of barbarisms. A licentious affectation of novelty rather than any necessity to avoid circumlocutions, overwhelms our language with foreign words. (*Art.* 85.)

Examples. *Numerosity, cognition, irrefragibility, effluxion,* are from the Latin, and convey no new meanings, which had not been pre-occupied by other words of established reputation. And among our French imports we have *dernier resort, beaux arts, belles lettres,* and a legion besides, which some of our own writers, otherwise respectable, have fancied so many gems, capable of adding a wonderful lustre to their works.

Obs. 1. But this is a false brilliancy, which dazzles only those who forget that the Greeks branded a foreign term, in any of their writers, with the odious name of *barbarism.* Besides, the rules of pronunciation and orthography in French, are so different from those which obtain in English, that the far greater part of the French words yearly introduced, constitute so many anomalies with us, which, by loading the grammatical rules with exceptions, greatly corrupt the simplicity and regularity of our tongue.*

Corol. Two considerations ought to weigh with writers, and hinder them from wantonly admitting into their performances, such extraneous productions. One is, if these foreigners be allowed to settle amongst us, they will infallibly supplant the old inhabitants. Whatever ground is given to the one, is so much taken away from the other. No writer, therefore, ought to foment an humour of innovation which

* See "Principles of English Pronunciation," prefacing "Walker's Dictionary."

tends to make the language of his country still more changeable, and consequently, to render the style of his own writings sooner obsolete.

2. The other consideration is, that if he should not be followed in the use of those foreign words which he hath endeavoured to usher into the language, if they meet not with a favourable reception from the public, they will ever appear as spots in his compositions. Whether, therefore, he be or be not imitated, he will himself prove a loser in the end. Moreover, as borrowing naturally exposeth to the suspicion of poverty, this poverty will much more readily, and more justly too, be imputed to the writer than to the language.

> In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
> Alike fantastic, if too new or old;
> Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.*

110. *By the use of good words new modelled.* The third species of barbarism, is that produced by new formations and compositions from primitives in present use.

Illus. 1. Greater liberty ought to be given on this article than on the former, provided the English analogy be observed in the composition, and the new modelled word be wanted in the language. (*Art.* 104. *and its Illus.*)

2. Never, on the plea of necesssity, patronise frivolous innovations; nor the collision of words which are naturally the most unfit for coalescing, and where the analogy of the formation exhibits only an obscure meaning till it be analysed. Rest assured this jargon will not creep into vogue in the charter language of the present age. (*Art.* 77. *and* 86.)

3. Another modern refinement is, the alteration that has been made, by some late writers, on proper names, and some other words of foreign extraction, and on their derivatives, on pretence of bringing them nearer, both in pronunciation and in spelling, to the original names, as they appear in the language from which those words were taken.—But this hath been the custom of all nations. When the Grecians and Romans introduced a foreign name into their languages, they made such alterations in it, as might facilitate the pronunciation to their own people, and render it more analogous to the other words of their tongue.

4. Another set of barbarisms, which also comes under this class, arises from the abbreviations of polysyllables, by lopping off all the syllables except the first, or the first and second.

Examples. Hyp for "hypochondriac," *ult* for "ultimate," *extra* for "extraordinary."

Scholium. The two classes of barbarisms last mentioned, comprehending new words and new formations, from words still current, offend against use, considered both as reputable and as national.—(*Art.* 77. *and* 85.) A writer who employs antiquated or novel phraseology, must do it with design: he cannot err from inadvertence, as he may do with respect to provincial or vulgar expressions. He cannot be habituated to antiquated or novel words and phrases. It is habit that renders it so difficult to avoid those which are provincial or vulgar. How much soever folly or vanity may actuate the herd of

* Pope's Essay on Criticism.

scribblers, whose greatest struggle is to insinuate a favorable opinion of their *erudition*, the writer of true genius and taste will not expect to obtain reputation by such artifices. He will neither discolour his style by the faint tinge of antiquity or novelty, nor by the coarse daubing of provinciality and vulgarity.

111. The Solecism. The transgression of any of the syntactic rules is a solecism; and there are various ways in which almost every rule may be transgressed.

Illus. 1. Leaving it to grammarians to exemplify and class the flagrant solecisms which betray ignorance in the rudiments of the language; we proceed to take notice of a few less observable, which writers of great reputation, and even of critical skill in the language, have slidden into through inattention.

2. Solecisms are more excusable than barbarisms; the former are usually reckoned the effect of negligence, the latter of affectation.—Negligence, often the consequence of a noble ardour in regard to sentiments, is, at the worst, a venial trespass, and sometimes it is not even without energy; affectation is always a deadly sin against the laws of rhetoric. (*Obs. Art.* 85.)

3. Much greater indulgence, in the article of solecisms, is given to the speaker than to the writer; and to the writer who proposeth to persuade or move, greater allowances are made, than to him who proposeth barely to instruct or please. The more vehemence is required by the nature of the subject, the less correctness is exacted in the manner of treating it. Nay, a slight deficiency in this respect is not nearly so prejudicial to the scope of an oration, as a scrupulous accuracy, which bears in it the symptoms of study and art.

Corol. Grammatical inaccuracies ought to be avoided by a writer, for two reasons: First, because a reader will much sooner discover them than a hearer, how attentive soever he may be. Secondly, as writing implies more leisure and greater coolness than speaking, defects of this kind, when discovered in the former, will be less excused than they would be in the latter.

Of the various solecisms which may be committed, we have

I. A mistake of the plural number for the singular.

II. Inaccuracies in the construction and application of the degrees of comparison suggest the following rules:

Illus. 1. The comparative degree implies commonly a comparison of one thing with *one* other thing; the superlative, on the contrary, always implies a comparison of one thing with *many* others. The former consequently requires to be followed by the singular, the latter by the plural, yet in the sentence, "He is wiser than we," the comparative is rightly followed by a plural.

2. In a comparison of equality, though the positive degree only is used, the construction must be similar to that of the comparative, both being followed by conjunctions which govern no case.

3. The particles, *as* after the positive, and *than* after the comparative, are conjunctions and not prepositions. For example, "I esteem you more than they," is correct; and so is the sentence, "I esteem you more than them," but in a sense quite different from the former, since

in the one case it expresses *their esteem for you*, and in the other *my esteem for them.*

Corol. The second canon (*Art.* 91.) which teaches us to prefer what is most agreeable to analogy, leads us to decide that *than* is a conjunction.

4. The superlative, followed by the singular number, is an error which may be corrected by substituting the comparative in room of the superlative.

III. Possessive pronouns must always agree in number and person with their antecedents.

IV. Mistakes in the tenses of the verbs suggest many rules.

Rule. 1. When in two connected clauses the first verb is in the present or the future, the second, which is dependent on it, cannot be in the past.

2. On the contrary, when the first verb is in the preterite the second ought to be so too.

3. When the first verb is in the preterperfect, the second may be in the preterimperfect.

4. In expressing abstract or universal truths, according to the idiom of our language, the present tense of the verb ought always to be used; because the verb, in such cases, has no relation to time, but serves merely as a copula to the two terms of the proposition.*

5. When speaking of a past event which occasions the mention of some general truth, never use the same tense in enunciating the general truth, with that which had been employed in the preceding part of the sentence.

6. The construction of two verbs, both under the regimen of the same conjunction *if*, requires both the verbs to be in the *subjunctive mood.*

7. Never omit, in a subsequent part of a sentence, the participle which makes part of the complex tense, from an idea that the occurrence of a verb in a former clause of the sentence will supply the defect.

8. Never couple words together, and assign to them a common regimen, when *use* will not admit that they be construed in the same manner.

Illus. "Will it be urged that the four gospels are *as old*, or even *older than* tradition.†" The words *as old* and *older* cannot have a common regimen. The one requires to be followed by the conjunction *as*, the other by *than.*

V. The connexion between the preposition and the noun or pronoun governed by it, is so intimate, that there cannot be a reference to the one without the other. The words *to which* are rightly construed with the passive participle, but the construction is *which* with the active verb.

VI. The repetition of the relative, in all sentences, makes the insertion of the personal pronoun necessary.

Illus. Both these rules are transgressed in the sentence, "few talents to which most men are not born, or at least may not acquire," which ought to run thus, "or *which* at least they may not acquire."

Corol. A part of a complex tense means nothing without the rest of the tense; therefore the rest of the tense ought always to be found in the sentence.

VII. In the syntax of nouns, expressions which can only be rightly construed with a preposition, should never be without their proper regimen.

* In *logic* the copula is the word which unites the subject and predicate of a proposition.

† Bolinb. Phil. Ess. IV. c. 19.

VIII. As regularity in the management of prepositions implies a proper choice of these particles, their omission is a great blemish when their presence is required.

The wrong choice of prepositions suggests the necessity of not using as synonymous such as rarely admit the same construction.

IX. Inaccuracies in the applications of the conjunctions and adverbs, arise from want of attention to those little things which ought not to be altogether disregarded by any writer.

Corol. The words of the language constitute the materials with which the orator must work; the rules of the language teach him by what management those materials are rendered useful. But purity is using rightly the words of the language by a careful observance of the rules. It is, therefore, justly considered as essential to all the other graces of expression. Hence, not only perspicuity and vivacity, but even elegance and animation derive a lustre.

112. THE IMPROPRIETY is the third and last class of faults against purity. The *barbarism* is an offence against *etymology*, the *solecism* against *syntax*, the *impropriety* against *lexicography*.

Obs. The impropriety, then, may be in application of single words, or of phrases; but as none but those who are grossly ignorant of our tongue, can misapply the words that have no affinity to those whose place they are made to occupy, we shall only take notice of those improprieties, into which a writer is apt unwarily to be seduced by some resemblance or proximity in sound or sense, or both.

I. By proximity of sound some are misled to use the word *observation* for "observance." When *to observe* signifies "to remark," the verbal noun is *observation*, when it signifies "to obey," or "to keep," the verbal is *observance*.

II. *Endurance* for "duration." The former properly signifies "patience" as applied to *suffering*; the latter means "lasting" as applied to *time*.

III. *Ceremonious* and "ceremonial" are distinguished thus: they come from the same noun *ceremony*, which signifies both a *form of civility*, and a *religious rite*. The epithet expressive of the first signification is *ceremonious*, of the second *ceremonial*.

IV. When *genius* denotes mental abilities, its plural is "geniuses," and not genii, a term which denotes spirits or demons, good or bad.

113. Of improprieties arising from a similitude in sense, we have,

I. *Veracity*, used for "reality." In strict propriety the word is only applicable to persons, and signifies not physical, but moral truth.

II. *Invention*, for "discovery." One discovers *truth*; another invents *falsehoods*. A *machinist* invents, an *observer* discovers.

III. *Verdict*, for "testimony." A *witness* gives his *testimony*; the *jury* give their *verdict*.

IV. *Risible*, for "ridiculous." The former hath an active, the latter a passive signification. Thus, we say, "man is a *risible* animal." "A fop is a ridiculous character."

V. The word *together* often supplies the place of *successively*. The resemblance which continuity in time bears to continuity in place, is the source of this impropriety. When the Spectator says, "I do not

remember that I ever spoke three sentences *together* in my whole life," propriety teaches his reader to substitute *successively* for "together."

VI. *Everlasting* for "eternity." The only proper sense of the former word is *time without end;* the latter denotes *time without beginning.*

VII. *Apparent*, for "certain," "manifest," is often equivocal. By analogy, *seeming* is opposed to *real; visible* to *concealed.* And hence, also, "to make appear," for *to prove, to evince, to show*, is improper. A sophist may *make* a thing *appear* to be what it is not; but this is very different from showing what it is.

114. THE IDIOTISM, or the employing of an English word in a sense which it bears in some provincial dialect, in low and partial use, or which, perhaps the corresponding word bears in some foreign tongue, but unsupported by general use in our own language, belongs to the class of improprieties now under consideration. *(Art.* 102.)

I. *Impracticable* for "impassable," when applied to roads, is an application which suits the French, but not the English idiom.

II. *Decompound* for "analyse." *To decompound* is "to compound of materials already compounded:" *to analyse* is to resolve a compound into its first principles.

III. *To arrive* for "happen." We *arrive at a place*, but *misfortunes happen to man.*

IV. *To hold* should never be employed for "to use"; nor *to give into* for "to adopt."

Obs. Gallicisms, Latinisms, and vulgarisms, result from affectation, pedantry, and ignorance. (*Obs. Art.* 85.)

V. The PLEONASM, coupled with *ambiguity*, is the highest degree of *idiomatical* expression; as, "the general report is, that *he should have said;*" for, "that he said." What a man *said*, is often very different from what he *should have said;* hence the pleonasm of the auxiliaries, "should have," conveys also an ambiguity.

Obs. These remarks on the *idiotism*, do not extend to *satire* and *burlesque*, (*Obs. Art.* 105.) in which a vulgar, or even what is called a cant expression, will sometimes be more emphatical than any proper term whatever; as in these lines of Pope:

> Whether the charmer sinner it or saint it,
> If folly grows romantic, I must paint it.

VI. The derivatives *falseness, falsity, falsehood*, from the root *false*, are often by mistake employed for one another, though in the best use they are evidently distinguished.

Illus. 1. *Falseness* is properly used, in a moral sense, for want of veracity, and applied only to persons: the other two are applied only to things.

2. *Falsity* denotes that quality in the abstract, which may be defined contrariety to truth, as an error arising in a demonstration from false premises in the proposition.

3. *Falsehood* is an untrue assertion.

VII. *Negligence* is improperly used for "neglect." The former implies habit, the latter denotes act.

VIII. *Conscience* for "consciousness." The former denotes the faculty, the latter a particular exertion.

IX. *Sophism*, for "sophistry." The former denotes a *fallacious argument*, the latter *fallacious reasoning*.

X. *Remember*, for "remind." We are reminded *by others:* we remember *of ourselves*.

XI. *Plenty*, for "plentiful." The latter is an adjective, the former, a noun. The misapplication of either is a gross vulgarism.

XII. *Doctrines*, for "precepts." The former are *credenda*, which we are required to believe; the latter, we are called on to *obey*, as rules of life.

115. THE VULGARISM springs from an affectation of an easy, familiar, and careless manner of writing; but it is an error to imagine, that the less pains one bestows upon style, it must appear the more natural.

Obs. 1. Ease is one thing, carelessness another; and the former is most commonly the result of the greatest care. It is like ease in motion, which, though originally the effect of discipline, when once it hath become habitual, has a more simple and more natural appearance, than is to be observed in any manner which untutored nature can produce.

> But ease in writing flows from art, not chance;
> As those move easiest who have learnt to dance.*

116. The love of *novelty*, and a fondness for *variety*, are the two sources whence flow those numerous inadvertencies with which the style of many writers is chargeable. *(Art. 78, Illus.)*

Illus. 1. The former, when excessive, tends directly to misguide us, by making us disdain the beaten track, for no other reason but because it is the beaten track. The idea of vulgarity, in the imaginations of those who are affected with this principle, is connected with every thing that is conceived as customary. The genuine issue of this extreme, is, not only improprieties, but even absurdities, and fustian and bombast.

2. The latter, to wit, a fondness for variety, produceth often the same effect, though more indirectly. It begets an immoderate dread of becoming tedious, by repeating too frequently the same sound. In order to avoid this, a writer resolves, at any rate, to diversify his style, let it cost what it will. But this fancied excellence usually costs more than it is worth; for to it, very often, propriety and perspicuity are both sacrificed.

Obs. From these illustrations, we derive the following *criteria*:—

Crit. I. The mind is fatigued by the frequent recurrence of the same idea: that performance which grows dull as we advance, is chargeable with an excess of uniformity.

Corol. If, therefore, there be a remarkable paucity of ideas, a diversity of words will not answer the purpose, or give to the work the appearance of variety.

II. On the contrary, when an author is at great pains to vary his expressions, and for this purpose ever deserts the common road, he will, to an intelligent reader, but the more expose his poverty, the more

* Pope's Imitations.

he is solicitous to conceal it. You will discover this penury, when an author is always recurring to such words as custom hath appropriated to purposes different from those for which we use them.

117. IMPROPRIETY IN PHRASES is ascertained, when the expression, on being grammatically analysed, is discovered to contain some inconsistency.

Illus. 1. Such is the phrase *of all others*, after the superlative degree, which, when interpreted by the rules of English syntax, implies a thing different from itself; as it "celebrates the Church of England as the *most* perfect of *all others*."* Properly, either—"as more perfect than any other;"—or, "as the most perfect of all churches."

2. On this principle, Milton falls into an impropriety in these words:—

> - - - - - - Adam,
> The comeliest man of men *since born*
> *His sons.* The fairest of *her daughters*, Eve.†
> - - - - - The loveliest pair
> That ever *since* in love's embraces met.‡

3. The general laws of the language, which constitute the most extensive and important use, may be pleaded against these expressions. Now it is one principal method of purifying a language, to lay aside such idioms as are inconsistent with its radical principles and constituent rules; or as, when interpreted by such principles and rules, exhibit manifest nonsense. Nor does the least inconvenience result from this conduct, as we can be at no loss to find expressions of our meaning altogether as natural, and entirely unexceptionable.

4. "Than *the rest of* our neighbours," is an impropriety which may be corrected by omitting the words in Italics. And when Swift, in his voyage to Brobdignag, says, "I had like to have gotten one or two broken heads;" one unavoidably asks, "how many heads he had on his body?" That "once or twice" he had like to have got his head broken for his impertinence, one can easily conceive.

5. One thing may be cut into two or more; but it is inconceivable, that by cutting, two or more things should be made one. We cannot therefore speak of shortening discourse, "by cutting polysyllables into one§."

6. A wrong, *wilfully* committed, is no mistake. The words used in the following sentence, are therefore incompatible:—"I have not *wilfully* committed the least mistake‖."

7. A *pure limpid stream* cannot also be *foul with stains;* therefore the following lines,

> So the *pure limpid* stream, when *foul with stains*,
> Of rushing torrents and descending rains¶,

involve in them an absurdity, rather than an impropriety.

8. When an author says one thing and means another, his fault may be classed with *impropriety in phrases;* or it may come under the article of *perspicuity*.

9. It is an incongruity in the combination of words, to speak of "*falling* into a man's conversation**;" and to "*fall* into conversation

* Swift's Apology for the Tale of a Tub. † Paradise Lost. ‡ Ibid. b. iv.
§ "Voyage to Laputa." ‖ Swift's "Remarks on the Barrier Treaty."
¶ Addison's Cato. ** Spectator, No. 49.

with a man*," is little better than the impropriety in another dress; for grammatical purity, the most essential of all the virtues of elocution, would teach another construction.

118. PRECISION is the last ingredient of perspicuity. Precision means, that all redundant phraseology shall, without hesitation, be expunged; and that no more words and phrases, however pure and proper, shall be employed, than are necessary to convey the meaning.

Illus. The exact import of precision, may be drawn from the etymology of the word. It comes from "præcidere," to cut off: it imports retrenching all superfluities, and pruning the expression so as to exhibit neither more or less than an exact copy of his idea who uses it. It is often difficult to separate the quantities of style from the qualities of thought; and it is found so in this instance; for, in order to write with precision, though this be properly a quality of style, one must possess a very considerable degree of distinctness and accuracy in his manner of thinking. *(Art. 74. Corol.)*

119. The words which a man uses to express his ideas may be faulty in three respects; they may either not express that idea which the author intends, but some other which only resembles, or is a-kin to it; or, they may express that idea, but not quite fully and completely; or, they may express it, together with something more than he intends.

Illus. 1. Precision stands opposed to all these three faults; but chiefly to the last. In an author's writing with propriety, his being free from the two former faults seems implied. The words which he uses are proper; that is, they express that idea which he intends, and they express it fully; but to be precise, signifies, that they express that idea, and no more. There is nothing in his words which introduces any foreign idea, any superfluous, unseasonable accessory, so as to mix it confusedly with the principal object, and thereby to render our conception of that object loose and indistinct. This requires a writer to have, himself, a very clear apprehension of the object he means to represent to us; to have laid fast hold of it in his mind; and never to waver in any one view he takes of it; a perfection to which, indeed, few writers attain.

2. The following examples possess all the ingredients now specified. "Those who live in the world, and in good company, are quicksighted with regard to every defect or singularity in behaviour; the slightest irregularity in motion, in speech, or in dress, which, to a peasant, would be invisible, escapes not their observation."—"The very populace in Athens, were critics in pronunciation, in language, and even in eloquence; and in Rome at present, the most illiterate shop-keeper is a better judge of statues and of pictures, than many persons of refined education in London†." No word or phrase is wanting; no word or phrase is superfluous; all are pure and all are proper.

* Campbell's Phil. of Rhet. Vol. I. Book ii. Chap. iii.
† Lord Kame's Elements of Criticism.

120. The use and importance of precision, may be deduced from the nature of the human mind. It can never view, clearly and distinctly, above one object at a time. If it must look at two or three together, especially objects among which there is a resemblance or connexion, it finds itself confused and embarrassed. It cannot clearly perceive in what they agree, and in what they differ.

Illus. Thus, were any object, suppose some animal, to be presented to me, of whose structure I wanted to form a distinct notion, I would desire all its trappings to be taken off, I would require it to be brought before me by itself, and to stand alone, that there might be nothing to distract my attention. The same is the case with words. If, when you would inform me of your meaning, you also tell me more than what conveys it; if you join foreign circumstances to the principal object; if, by unnecessarily varying the expression, you shift the point of view, and make me see sometimes the object itself, and sometimes another thing that is connected with it; you thereby oblige me to look on several objects at once, and I lose sight of the principal. You load the animal you are shewing me, with so many trappings and collars, and bring so many of the same species before me, somewhat resembling, and yet somewhat differing, that I see none of them clearly.*

121. This forms what is called a loose style; and is the proper opposite to precision. It generally arises from using a superfluity of words. Feeble writers employ a multitude of words to make themselves understood, as they think, more distinctly; and they only confound the reader.

Illus. They are sensible of not having caught the precise expression, to convey what they would signify; they do not, indeed, conceive their own meaning very precisely themselves; and, therefore, help it out, as they can, by this and the other word, which may, as they suppose, supply the defect, and bring you somewhat nearer to their idea: they are always going about it and about it, but never just hit the thing. The image, as they set it before you, is always seen double; and no double image is distinct. When an author tells me of his hero's *courage* in the day of battle, the expression is precise, and I understand it fully. But if, from the desire of multiplying words, he must needs praise his *courage* and *fortitude;* at the moment he joins these words together, my idea begins to waver. He means to express one quality more strongly; but he is, in truth, expressing two. *Courage* resists danger; *fortitude* supports pain. The occasion of exerting each of these qualities is different; and being led to think of both together, when only one of them should be before me, my view is rendered unsteady, and my conception of the objects indistinct.

Corol. From what has been said, it appears that an author may, in a qualified sense, be perspicuous, while yet he is far from being precise. He uses proper words, and proper arrangement; he gives you the idea as clear as he conceives it himself; and so far he is perspicuous; but the ideas are not very clear in his own mind; they are

* Blair's Lect. on Rhet. Vol. I.

loose and general; and, therefore, cannot be expressed with precision. All subjects do not equally require precision. It is sufficient, on many occasions, that we have a general view of the meaning. The subject, perhaps, is of the known and familiar kind; and we are in no hazard of mistaking the sense of the author, though every word which he uses be not precise and exact.

122. Precision is frequently violated by the introduction of supernumerary words and phrases, *(Illus. 1, and 2.)*; but chiefly by the accumulation of those which are either nearly synonymous, or which, though not synonymous, include the signification of one another. *(Art. 123.)*

Illus. 1. "I should be glad to know what intervals of life such persons can *possibly* set apart for the improvement of their minds*." The adverb *possibly* is superfluous. It suggests no meaning not implied in the auxiliary *can*, which denotes all the power or capacity of an agent.

2. "The pleasures of imagination are *more* preferable than those of sense or intellect†."—"The *very* slightest singularity‡." *More* is superfluous, when added to *preferable*, and *very* is the same when added to *slightest*. *Preferable*, and *slightest*, express every idea contained in *more preferable*, and *very slightest*. These redundances are derived from conversation, the vulgarities and inaccuracies of which frequently insinuate themselves insensibly into our written language.

123. The more frequent violations of precision, those indeed more difficult to be avoided and corrected, are of the second class, and appear when words or phrases are introduced, which have their meaning anticipated by the general sense, or by other words of the sentence.

Illus. 1. Horace himself is not altogether unexceptionable.

> "Quod si me vatibus Lyricis inseres,
> Sublimi feriam sidera vertice."

The adjective *sublimi* is perfectly agreeable in sound, nay, necessary to complete the versification, but it is superfluous in communicating the sense; because, after acquainting us that his head would strike the stars, the poet had no need to add, that it would be raised very high.

2. Addison begins the tragedy of Cato with a series of tautologies.

> "The dawn is overcast, the morning low'rs,
> And heavily in clouds brings on the day,
> The great, the important day, big with the fate
> Of Cato and of Rome."

In the first two lines, the same sentiment is three times repeated in different words. "The dawn is overcast," means no more than "the morning lowers," and both these phrases denote exactly the same sense with the line that follows, "and heavily in clouds brings on the day." Three synonymous words appear in the third line; "the great, the important day, big with the fate." The author might as well have repeated any one of these words three times, had it not been for the sake of the measure.

3. What is farther remarkable, is, that this example points out one of the classical sources from which Addison derived many of the splen-

* Swift. † Addison. ‡ Elements of Criticism.

did sentiments of this work. Lucan introduces the day on which the battle of Pharsalia was fought, in terms, which leave no room to doubt, that Addison had the description in his "mind's eye," when he began the tragedy of Cato.

> "Segnior oceano quam lex eterna vocabat,
> Luctificus Titan, nunquam magis æthera contra
> Egit equos. currumque, polo rapiente, retorsit.
> Defectusque pati voluit, raptæque labores
> Lucis; et attraxit nubes, non pabula flammæ;
> Sed ne Thessalico purus luceret in orbe."

It was unlucky that Addison could appropriate no circumstance of this magnificent description, but the one he has selected: the darkness of the morning, resulting from the quantity and thickness of the clouds, which induced him, perhaps, to dwell on it to excess.

Obs. 1. Cicero, in his orations to the people, seems to have been guided by the opinion, that full, flowing, and copious diction, was most congruous to the taste, and best adapted to lead the resolutions, of a popular audience; but, that it was less correct in itself, that it was unsuitable to the oratory of the senate, and that it was still more discordant with the style of his philosophical and critical works.

2. His great master, Demosthenes, in addressing similar audiences, never had recourse to a similar expedient. He avoided redundances, as equivocal and feeble. He aimed only to make the deepest and most efficient impression; and he employed for this purpose, the plainest, the fewest, and the most emphatic words. "Supernumerary words may swell a period, or captivate the ear, but they must diminish the effect upon the understanding or the heart."* (§ *V. p.* 70.)

Illus. 1. In support of these remarks, we shall select some passages from the orations of Cicero against Cataline, addressed to the people.

"Multi sæpe honores diis immortalibus, justi, habiti sunt, ac debiti; sed profecto justiores nunquam. Erepti enim ex crudelissimo ac miserrimo intentu, et erepti sine cæde, sine sanguine, sine exercitu, sine dimicatione, me uno, togato duce et imperatore, vicistis."

The words, "cæde, sanguine, exercitu, dimicatione," are not synonymous, yet do they virtually include the meaning of one another, and therefore multiply words, without impressing or extending the meaning, without completing or embellishing the picture.

Again. If there was no slaughter, it was unnecessary to add, that no blood was shed; and if there was no army, there could be neither slaughter, blood, nor fighting. He might as well have subjoined many other puerilities; as, "without marching, without swords, without dust, without fatigue." Besides the quaintness of supposing himself a general "without an army," expressed in the clause, "me uno, togato duce et imperatore," *duce* and *imperatore* are perfectly synonymous, and one of them is therefore superfluous.

2. "Neque nos unquam, dum ille in urbe hostis fuisset, tantis periculis rempublicam, tanta pace, tanto otio, tanto silentio, liberassemus." The words, "otio, silentio, pace," like those specified in the preceding example, all imply the signification of one another: they swell the period; they detain the same idea in view; but they convey no additional information.

3. Tillotson is among the most remarkable of English writers of reputation, for the profuse use of synonymous terms; as, for example, the following.

* Barrow.

"Acquiesce, and rest satisfied with."—"Upon the testimony and relation of others."—"Governed and conducted."—"Corruption and degeneracy."—"Embroiled and disordered."—"Wavering and unsettled."—"Apprehensions and fears."—"Support and bear up."—"Positive and peremptory."—"Special and particular."

4. Even some late authors of great eminence, will not, perhaps, be admitted to be altogether exempt from reprehension. "I am certain and confident, that the account I have given is true."—"Many excursions, fortuitous and unguided, have been made."—"A word is unfamiliar by disuse, and unpleasant by unfamiliarity."

In the first of these examples, the words, "certain" and "confident;" in the second, "fortuitous" and "unguided;" and in the third, "disuse" and "unfamiliarity," will be held by nice critics, to be either too nearly synonymous, or to include too much the meaning of one another, to permit, with propriety, their being placed in juxta-position in the same sentence. *(Art.* 113. § *VII.)*

Scholia 1. It is observed by Barrow, that these accumulations of words may perhaps appear, in part, to result from the deficiency of language, which supplies not a pertinent word for every idea; but they are much more the offspring of indistinct apprehension in the authors. When our ideas are not clear, our expression savours of similar embarrassment. As we do not perceive completely what we intend to communicate, we multiply words, concluding, most erroneously, that the meaning is more fully and accurately expressed, and that the chance is greater of our being better understood. We do not attempt to remove the origin of the error—the obscurity of our thoughts; we do not attend to this fact, that the deepest impression is made when no more words are employed than are necessary to convey the sense, and that every superfluous expression contributes to confound, not to enlighten the understanding. "Obstat quicquid non adjuvat."*

2. But a considerable number of words, either synonymous, or nearly so, in a language, is so far from being a blemish, or a cause of disorder, that they are a source of much conveniency, and even of some pleasure. They enable us to infuse variety into style; and to prevent the monotony which arises from the too frequent recurrence of the same sound. These changes of words, and modulation, constitute the richness of a language, and the writer possesses important advantages, who finds his endeavours to improve his composition, seconded by the structure of the tongue which he employs.

3. Yet the number of synonymous words is not so great in any language as is commonly supposed. Few people are at much pains to ascertain the meaning of the words they use; or to inquire whether the sense which they affix to any word, is the most pertinent, or adopted by the most accurate judges. Even authors frequently assign their own meaning to their words, without inquiring scrupulously, whether it is the most classical, or the most proper. They generally infer, that the reader's opinion will coincide with their own, or that he will easily perceive the difference; so that no ambiguity shall arise.

4. For these reasons, synonymous words are supposed more numerous than they are, and much more so than nicety of criticism will admit. Authors, on one hand, are careless in the meanings which they affix to words. The critics, on the other, are too refined in establishing meanings, which even accurate authors neither remember nor ap-

* Quinctilian.

ply. The labours of the critic may excite attention, and diminish improprieties; but they cannot expect that practice will realize, in any language, the nice distinctions, or refined varieties, which they may have endeavoured to introduce.

124. The instances which are given in the following illustrations, may themselves be of use; and they will serve to shew the necessity of attending, with care and strictness, to the exact import of words, if ever we would write with propriety or precision.

Illus. 1. *Austerity, severity, rigour.* Austerity relates to the manner of living; severity, of thinking; rigour, of punishing. To austerity, is opposed effeminacy; to severity, relaxation; to rigour, clemency. A hermit is austere in his life; a casuist, severe in his application of religion or law; a judge, rigorous in his sentences.

2. *Custom, habit.* Custom, respects the action; habit, the actor. By custom, we mean the frequent repetition of the same act; by habit, the effect which that repetition produces on the mind or body. By the custom of walking often in the streets, one acquires a habit of idleness.

3. *Surprised, astonished, amazed, confounded.* I am surprised, with what is new or unexpected; I am astonished, at what is vast or great; I am amazed, with what is incomprehensible; I am confounded, by what is shocking or terrible.

4. *Desist, renounce, quit, leave off.* Each of these words implies, some pursuit or object relinquished; but from different motives. We desist, from the difficulty of accomplishing. We renounce, on account of the disagreeableness of the object, or pursuit. We quit, for the sake of some other thing which interests us more; and we leave off, because we are weary of the design. A politician desists from his designs, when he finds they are impracticable; he renounces the court, because he has been affronted by it; he quits ambition for study or retirement; and leaves off his attendance on the great, as he becomes old and weary of it.

5. *Pride, vanity.* Pride, makes us esteem ourselves; vanity, makes us desire the esteem of others. It is just to say, as Dean Swift has done, that a man is too proud to be vain.

6. *Haughtiness, disdain.* Haughtiness, is founded on the high opinion we entertain of ourselves; disdain, on the low opinion we have of others.

7. *To distinguish, to separate.* We distinguish, what we do not want to confound with another thing; we separate, what we want to remove from it. Objects are distinguished from one another, by their qualities. They are separated, by the distance of time or place.

8. *To weary, to fatigue.* The continuance of the same thing wearies us; labour fatigues us. I am weary with standing; I am fatigued with walking. A suitor wearies us by his perseverance; fatigues us by his importunity.

9. *To abhor, to detest.* To abhor, imports, simply, strong dislike; to detest, imports also, strong disapprobation. One abhors being in debt; he detests treachery.

10. *To invent, to discover.* We invent things that are new; we discover what was before hidden. Galileo invented the telescope; Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood.

11. *Only, alone.* Only, imports that there is no other of the same kind; alone, imports being accompanied by no other. An only child, is one who has neither brother nor sister; a child alone, is one who is left by itself. There is a difference, therefore, in precise language, betwixt these two phrases, "virtue only makes us happy;" and, "virtue alone makes us happy." Virtue only makes us happy, imports, that nothing else can do it. Virtue alone makes us happy, imports, that virtue, by itself, or unaccompanied with other advantages, is sufficient to do it. (*Corol. Art.* 150.)

12. *Entire, complete.* A thing is entire, by wanting none of its parts; complete, by wanting none of the appendages that belong to it. A man may have an entire house to himself; and yet not have one complete apartment.

13. *Tranquillity, peace, calm.* Tranquillity respects a situation free from trouble, considered in itself; peace, the same situation with respect to any causes that might interrupt it; calm, with regard to a disturbed situation going before, or following it. A good man enjoys tranquillity, in himself; peace, with others; and calm, after the storm.

14. *A difficulty, an obstacle.* A difficulty, embarrasses; an obstacle, stops us. We remove the one; we surmount the other. Generally, the first, expresses somewhat arising from the nature and circumstances of the affair; the second, somewhat arising from a foreign cause. Philip found difficulty in managing the Athenians, from the nature of their dispositions; but the eloquence of Demosthenes was the greatest obstacle to his designs.

15. *Wisdom, prudence.* Wisdom, leads us to speak and act what is most proper. Prudence, prevents our speaking or acting improperly. A wise man, employs the most proper means for success; a prudent man, the safest means for not being brought into danger.

16. *Enough, sufficient.* Enough, relates to the quantity which one wishes to have of any thing; sufficient, relates to the use that is to be made of it. Hence, enough, generally imports a greater quantity than sufficient does. The covetous man never has enough; although he has what is sufficient for nature. (§ *VII. p.* 70.)

17. *To avow, to acknowledge, to confess.* Each of these words imports the affirmation of a fact, but in very different circumstances. To avow, supposes the person to glory in it; to acknowledge, supposes a small degree of faultiness, which the acknowledgement compensates; to confess, supposes a higher degree of crime. A patriot avows his opposition to a bad minister, and is applauded; a gentleman acknowledges his mistake, and is forgiven; a prisoner confesses the crime he is accused of, and is punished.

18. *To remark, to observe.* We remark, in the way of attention, in order to remember; we observe, in the way of examination, in order to judge. A traveller remarks the most striking objects he sees; a general observes all the motions of his enemy. (§ *I. p.* 69.)

19. *Equivocal, ambiguous.* An equivocal expression is one which has one sense open, and designed to be understood: another sense

concealed, and understood only by the person who uses it. An ambiguous expression, is one which has apparently two senses, and leaves us at a loss which of them to give it. An equivocal expression, is used with an intention to deceive; an ambiguous one, when it is used with design, is with an intention not to give full information. An honest man will never employ an equivocal expression; a confused man may often utter ambiguous ones, without any design. I shall give only one instance more. (*Art.* 113.)

20. *With, by.* Both these particles express the connexion between some instrument, or means of effecting an end, and the agent who employs it; but *with*, expresses a more close and immediate connexion; *by*, a more remote one. We kill a man *with* a sword; he dies *by* violence.. The criminal is bound *with* ropes *by* the executioner.

The proper distinction in the use of these particles, is elegantly marked in a passage of Dr. Robertson's History of Scotland. When one of the old Scottish kings was making an inquiry into the tenure *by* which his nobles held their lands, they started up and drew their swords: "*By* these," said they, "we acquired our lands, and *with* these we will defend them."—"*By* these we acquired our lands," signifies the more remote means of acquisition by force and martial deed; and, "*with* these we will defend them," signifies the immediate direct instrument, the sword, which they would employ in their defence. (§ *VIII. p.* 70.)

Obs. These are instances of words in our language, which, by careless writers, are apt to be employed as perfectly synonymous, and yet are not so. Their significations approach, but are not precisely the same. The more the distinction in the meaning of such words is weighed, and attended to, the more clearly and forcibly shall we speak or write.*

* The Abbe Girard's Synonymes Francoises, contains a large collection of such apparent synonymes in the language. The Abbe shows, with much accuracy, the difference in their signification. Nothing would contribute more to precise and elegant writing, than attention to the force of words, and to the several distinctions betwixt terms accounted synonymous in our own language.

BOOK III.

ON THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES, THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PERSPICUITY, AND THE HARMONY OF PERIODS.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE NATURE OF SENTENCES AND PERIODS.

125. HITHERTO we have investigated the nature of words detached and unconnected, in the same manner as an architect selects and prepares the materials of an edifice. We are now, like the same artist, to delineate the plan of execution, or to point out the most proper conjunction and adaptation of the materials to accomplish the end in view.

Obs. As the best materials for building will not form a convenient and elegant habitation, unless they are adjusted on a proper plan, so the purest and best chosen words will not constitute a perspicuous and beautiful sentence, unless they are properly arranged. But before we take up this branch of the subject, it is requisite to premise some observations on the nature of sentences and periods, and to unfold the principles which should regulate their composition. (§ *IX. Cor. p.* 69.)

126. The terms *sentence* and *period* are nearly synonymous, both denoting the quality of words or members comprehended between two full points, in writing or printing; and conveying a complete sense of themselves, independent of the words that either precede or follow them. (*Illus.* 2. *Art.* 130 *and* 139.)

Illus. 1. Both the sentence and the period may consist of subdivisions, clauses, or members; which are commonly separated from one another; these more closely connected, by commas, those more slightly, by semicolons.

2. In every sentence or period, there must be an agent, an action, and a subject on which the agent operates; that is, in the language of grammarians, there must be a nominative, a verb, and an accusative; as, "Cæsar amavit Juliam," "Alexander conquered Darius;" unless the verb be of the class called *intransitive*, which requires no subject to act upon, the action being exhausted on the agent; as, "Cicero declaimed."

127. If there be *two classes* of agents, actions, and subjects in the sentence, one class depending on the other, the sentence will consist of *two members*, which are commonly separated from one another by a comma. (*Illus.* 3. *Art.* 130. *and* 137.)

Illus. 1. "If Julius Cæsar had employed as much policy and cruelty as Augustus, he might have prevented the conspiracy formed against his life."

128. If there be *three classes* of agents, actions, and subjects, the sentence will consist of *three members*, separated by semicolons.

Illus. "If Julius Cæsar had employed as much policy and cruelty as Augustus; if he had proscribed every suspicious person under his government; he might have prevented the conspiracy formed against his life."

129. If there be *four classes* of agents, actions, and subjects, the sentence will consist of *four members*, separated by semicolons.

Illus. "If Julius Cæsar had employed as much cruelty and policy as Augustus; if he had proscribed every suspicious person under his government; he might have prevented the conspiracy formed against his life; and he might have lived, like that Emperor, to old age, flattered, obeyed, and adored by the Roman people."

Corol. Hence it is apparent, that though the presence of an agent, an action, and a subject, be requisite to constitute a member, yet they do not prohibit the attendance of explanatory words, particularly of adjectives or participles, which denote some quality or property of the agent or the subject. Accordingly, in the last member of the last example, "he might have lived, like that Emperor, to old age, flattered, obeyed, and adored by the Roman people;" the participles *flattered, obeyed, adored,* encroach not on the unity of the member, but tend merely to modify or illustrate its principal parts. (*See Illus.* 2. *Art.* 119.)

130. When a sentence contains one member only, it is called *simple;* when it contains more members than one, it is called *complex;* when it contains three, four, or more members, it generally takes the name of *period.* (*Art.* 139.)

Illus. 1. The ancient rhetoricians applied the name of *period* to all complex sentences, consisting of two or more members, but most frequently to those of four members. "Habet," says Quinctilian, "periodus membra minimum duo. Medius numerus videtur quatuor, sed recipit frequenter et plura."

2. To the period, according to Cicero, were given the different names of *ambitus, circuitus, comprehensio, continuatio, circumscriptio,* which seem all to have been derived from the Greek appellation, περίοδος.

3. To simple sentences were given the names of *commata, articuli, incise;* the same names by which were denoted the members of peri-

ods; because, perhaps, they coincided with them, in containing an agent, an action, and a subject.

131. SIMPLE SENTENCES are best adapted to express the controversial and reprehensive parts of an oration. The period is adapted to the more splendid and pathetic parts, particularly the introduction and the peroration.

132. A sentence is the smallest quantity of words which can express one entire proposition; that is, which can exhibit an agent as performing some action, or which can convey the affirmation of some truth. (*Illus.* 3. *Art.* 130.)

Illus. If, for example, the verb be intransitive, and be preceded by its nominative, a proposition will be expressed and a sentence will be formed; because an agent will be represented as performing an action, and a complete meaning will be communicated. "The sun rises;" "the morning lowers;" "I eat, drink, walk," &c.

133. But if the verb be transitive, the nominative and the verb will not form a sentence, a proposition, or a complete sense; because a subject will be wanting on which the action must be exerted.

Illus. 1. Thus the words, Cato killed, Cicero banished, exhibit inefficient actions, and incomplete senses. They leave the mind totally in suspense, till the subjects are subjoined on which the actions, killed, and banished, are exerted.

2. But if we say, Cato killed himself, Cicero banished Cataline, we present entire sentences, and communicate knowledge and information.

3. Again, if I assert, "that the three angles of a triangle are equal to," I exhibit an incomplete proposition, or an imperfect affirmation, till I add the words, "two right angles," which furnish an entire affirmation, and a perfect proposition.

Corol. Hence it appears that the essence of a sentence is, to convey one proposition, and one only; that it generally contains an agent, an action, and a subject, and *must* contain an *agent*, and an *action*. This constitutes what is called the unity of a sentence. (*Art.* 149.)

134. In constructing COMPLEX SENTENCES, which consist of different classes of agents, actions, and subjects, the unity will be preserved, and only one proposition, with all its circumstances, will be expressed, if such sentences, however complex, be properly composed. To accomplish this end, the different members of a simple sentence, or the different classes of agents, actions, and subjects, so depend on one another, that the sense is not fully communicated, till they are all properly arranged and conjoined. (*Art.* 133. *Illus.* 3.)

Illus. 1. The following member, for instance, "If virtue constitutes the supreme good," conveys no complete sense, and the hearer continues in suspense, till it is added, "all wise men will prefer it to

every other acquisition ;" when the sentence, thus completed, exhibits two classes of agents, actions, and subjects, but contains only one full meaning, or one proposition.

2. Again, " If virtue constitutes the supreme good ; if it can communicate the most substantial comfort and support ;" still these two members leave the sense imperfect, and the mind hesitates, till it is added, " all wise men will prefer it to every other acquisition ;" this completes both the proposition and the meaning.

3. The inconclusive members may be farther augmented : " If virtue constitutes the supreme good ; if it can communicate the most substantial comfort and support ; if it can procure the approbation of all good men in this world, and the favour of heaven hereafter ;" still the sense is incomplete, till the efficient member is subjoined, " all wise men will prefer it to every other acquisition ;" which produces an entire proposition, fully satisfies the mind, and preserves the unity of the period. *(Corol. Art.* 133.)

Corol. From these observations it is apparent, that the unity of a sentence is not impaired by its length, and that it will naturally be longer or shorter as the leading agent or member is attended with more or fewer dependent or explanatory agents, or members. No more members must ever be accumulated, than are consistent with unity and perspicuity ; but neither should the meaning nor the cadence be interrupted by a frequent recurrence of abrupt sentences of one or two members. The sense is the main regulating principle of the length, the sound is only a secondary consideration ; if, however, the former be preserved, the latter may be consulted, by a variety of modulation as great as possible. *(Scholium, Art.* 138.)

135. SHORT SENTENCES impart animation and energy to style. They are contrasts to periods, they are simple and perspicuous, and the ideas which they convey are usually lively, forcible, or dignified. They are also employed chiefly to deliver maxims of wisdom and sublime sentiments, which, supported by their natural importance and elevation, spurn the pomp and ornaments of language. *(Art.* 142.)

Obs. The intermediate sentences of two or three members participate the vivacity of short sentences, or the force and cadence of periods, according as they approach nearer to the one or the other. Their business is to convey the greater part of the sentiments which occur in the course of a long work, and which can be neither very lively nor very forcible.

136. All complex sentences are not equally connected, nor are their members equally dependent on one another. The members are often conjoined by a simple copulation, and the relation, in respect of meaning, amounts to little more than juxta-position. They contain different views of the same thought ; or the succeeding members explain, illustrate, extend, or restrict the preceding. *(Art.* 134.)

Illus. The following example will elucidate these remarks. " Eve-

ry one is in some measure master of the art which is generally distinguished by the name of physiognomy, and naturally forms to himself the character or fortune of a stranger, from the features and lineaments of his face."* Expunge the copulative, resume the agent *every one*, and two complete sentences will appear; so loose is the connection. (*See Art.* 121.)

137. Sentences, also, which contain the correspondent conjunctions, seldom admit more than two members. (*See Art.* 127.)

Example. "As the secrets of the Ugly Club were exposed to the public, that men might see there were some noble spirits in the world, who were not displeased with themselves upon considerations they had no choice in; so the discourse concerning idols tended to lessen the value which people put upon themselves for personal accomplishments, and gifts of nature†." The reader need not be told, that the conjunctions here are, *as* and *so*.

138. THE FULL PERIOD of several members possesses most dignity and modulation, and conveys also the greatest degree of force, by admitting the closest compression of thought. The members are generally conditional, and denote supposition or contrast.

Illus. 1. By *supposition* is understood, that the preceding members furnish a foundation, on which the conclusion is built: or that they operate as a climax, by which it is raised to the highest elevation.

2. By *contrast* is understood, that the preceding members are opposed to the concluding member, which, notwithstanding, possesses such energy, that the contrast takes place with irresistible effect.

3. If, besides, such periods are properly constructed; if the members are so formed, as to swell one above another in sound, as well as in sentiment; the impression will become so exceedingly powerful, as not to escape the most inattentive observer.

Example 1. Cicero supplies a beautiful period of the former species, in his oration for the Manilian law. "Quare cum et bellum ita necessarium sit, ut neglegi non possit; ita magnum, ut accuratissime sit administrandum; et cum si imperatorem præsicere possitis, in quo sit eximia belli scientia, singularis virtus, clarissima auctoritas, egregia fortuna; dubitabitis, Quirites, quin hoc tantum boni, quod vobis a diis immortalibus oblatum et datum est, in rempublicam conservandam atque amplificandam conferatis."

Illus. The members present a striking gradation in the sentiment. The war is absolutely necessary, and of great magnitude; Pompey is the greatest, the bravest, the most successful general; he must therefore be preferred, to secure the favour of the gods, and the safety of the empire. An analogous elevation is discernable in the sound. The members rise above one another, both in length and modulation. The pleasure of the ear powerfully concurs to recommend and impress the sense.

Example 2. The subsequent period will supply an example of the latter species. "Though the people should riot, and project insur-

* Addison. † Ibid.

rection ; though the tyrant should rage, and threaten destruction ; though the hurricane should lay open the bed of the sea, and the earthquake should tear the globe in pieces ; though the stars should fall from their spheres, and the frame of nature should be dissolved ; yet, according to Horace, Virtue will protect her votaries, and the good man will remain tranquil amid the ruins of the world."

Illus. A similar gradation is perceptible, as in the preceding instance. The members increase both in extent and cadence. The rising series of contrasts convey inexpressible dignity and energy to the conclusion.

Scholium. The proper union of sentences, also, is a matter of considerable importance to the effect of a composition. It seems, indeed, to be difficult, if not impracticable, to assign any rules relative to the proper intermixture of sentences expressive of strong, or even of moderate passion, as feelings on such occasions supersede all the dictates of theory, and the considerations of sound. *(Illus. Art.* 73.) But in grave and extended compositions, where the chief aim of the author is to instruct and amuse, the practice best supported by reason and experience, is, to intermix short, long, and intermediate sentences, in such a manner as to introduce as great variety as possible of cadences. Great care, however, must be taken to conceal all attention to art. If it become apparent, it disgusts the reader, and generally loses its effect. The species of sentence preferred by the writer should always seem to be the most proper and natural he could have employed. Its length should be determined always by the sense, never by the punctuation. *(Illus. Corol. and Art.* 147.)

CHAPTER II.

OF THE ERRORS TO BE AVOIDED IN THE STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES, AND THE ARRANGEMENT OF SINGLE WORDS.

139. WE derive little light from the names, *ambitus, circuitus, comprehensio, circumscriptio,* employed by Cicero, and approved by Quinctilian, as definitions of a period.—These names are manifestly derived from the Greek term περίοδος ; and the Latin critics have not ventured to proceed farther than their masters. *(Illus.* 2. *Art.* 130.)

Obs. Without having recourse to the meaning of a period, or the species of dependence that subsists among its members, to explain its nature, they have been satisfied with some indefinite speculations about its length, and the artificial measure in which it ought to be composed. They tell us, it should seldom exceed the length of four hexameter verses, or require more time to pronounce it than is requisite for one complete respiration of a full-grown man.* But the practice of the most perfect orators of antiquity frequently transgresses these rules.

* Cic. Orat. chap. 66. Quinct. lib. IX. chap. 4.

140. If two or more leading thoughts or agents, which have no natural relation to one another, nor any dependence on one another, and which concur not in pointing toward any one object, are introduced into a sentence, they will destroy its unity. This is a frequent and gross error in the structure of sentences.

Example. "As much as the fertile mould is fitted to the tree, as much as the strong and upright trunk of the oak or elm is fitted to the twining branches of the vine or ivy, so much are the very leaves, the seeds, and the fruits of these trees fitted to the various animals; these, again, to one another, and to the elements where they live, and to which they are as appendices, in a manner, fitted and joined; as either by wings for the air, fins for the water, feet for the earth, and by other correspondent inward parts, of more curious frame and texture."*

Illus. This long and involved period presents two agents; trees lead the first member, animals the second and the third. It should, therefore, it seems, be divided into two, or perhaps three sentences, with the proper agents prefixed. In this view, the first member may remain as it is, but the second and third members will assume the following appearance. "Animals, again, are fitted to one another, and to the elements where they live, and to which they are as appendices. They are adapted by wings for the air, fins for the water, feet for the earth, and by other correspondent inward parts, of more curious frame and texture."

141. Errors are frequently committed in the extent of periods, which are sometimes swelled to too great length; at other times formed too short or abrupt.

Obs. A long period, perfectly clear and well constructed, is always beautiful and pleasant, if it be not so prolonged as to exhaust the patience and attention of the reader. But it is extremely difficult to compose such periods; and, for this reason, a great many of them are ungraceful and obscure.

142. It is, perhaps, more necessary at present, to remonstrate against a deviation to the opposite extreme. The style of many of our present writers is too short and abrupt. (*Art.* 135.)

Illus. An affectation of sprightliness, or of oracular wisdom, seems to have infected some of our authors, and to have tempted them to employ that laconic diction, which is very current with our neighbours, the French, and which is generally supposed most correspondent to this species of composition. The appearance of such a style, is, however, no symptom of the general corruption of the public taste and ear. But when we recollect the progress and revolutions of literature, both in Athens and Rome, we cannot be too quick-sighted in apprehending danger. The manner of the authors who succeeded the most flourishing æra of the Grecian eloquence, undoubtedly displayed the strongest attachment to this mode of style; and many of

* Shaftesbury.

the most conspicuous writers of Rome, posterior to the Augustan age, furnish examples of the same kind of composition.

143. The arrangement of the AGENT, the ACTION, and the SUBJECT, the chief ingredients in all members, sentences, and periods, is almost invariable. The agent appears *first*, the action *succeeds*, and the subject, if there be one, takes its station *last*.

Illus. If the agent or the subject be modified or illustrated by adjectives, or the action be extended or restricted by adverbs, the dependent words assume their stations in juxta-position to their principals, the adjectives to their substantives, and the adverbs to their verbs. The adjective is placed *before* its correspondent substantive, when it has no circumstance depending on it; but it is situated after its substantive when it is followed by some modification. "A wise man." "A good book." "A spacious apartment." But we say, "A man wise for himself." "A book good for amusement." "An apartment convenient for company." Adverbs generally *follow* neuter, but *precede* active verbs. "Cæsar fought bravely." "Pompey rashly engaged him at Pharsalia." Our adjectives have no inflexions, and therefore can be arranged only on the principle of juxta-position. (§ *II. p.* 67.)

144. Though in every member of a sentence, there must be an agent, an action, and a subject, unless the action be intransitive; there are to be found in many members *two*, in some *three*, classes of agents, actions, and subjects, that explain, restrict, or otherwise depend on the primary class, by which the member is discriminated.

Example. "It is usual," says Addison,* "for a man who loves country-sports, to preserve the game on his own grounds, and divert himself on the grounds of his neighbours. My friend Sir Roger generally goes two or three miles from his own house, and gets into the frontiers of his estate before he beats about for a hare or a partridge, on purpose to spare his own fields, where he is always sure of finding diversion, when the worst comes to the worst."

Illus. In the former of these sentences, there is one class only of agents, actions, and subjects, "A man who loves country-sports;" but there are no fewer than three such classes, in the first clause of the latter sentence: "Sir Roger generally goes two or three miles; he gets into the frontiers of his estate, before he beats about for a hare or a partridge." These dependent classes, like dependent words, adjectives, and adverbs, are arranged on the principle of juxta position, as near to the primary class as is consistent with the intimacy of their relation. (*Illus. Art.* 143.)

145. Of the *arrangement* of the other parts of speech, *pronouns*, *participles*, *prepositions* and *conjunctions*, no directions can be given, that will not be liable to many exceptions. The following principles seem to include every

* Spectator, No. 131.

thing which can, with any confidence, be advanced on the subject.

Illus. 1. Pronouns have no other use in language, but to represent nouns; and, of course, they are commonly called to occupy the stations of the nouns they represent. They should, therefore, be marshalled agreeably to the stations in which their principals would appear. (§*VI. p.* 68, *and Art.* 71.)

2. The chief office of prepositions, is, to denote the relations of substantives to one another; they are, therefore, placed generally between the related objects, immediately before the one that bears the relation, and as near as possible to the other, to which the relation is borne. "A man of virtue." "Success to industry." "Genius with judgment."

3. Participles, in general, assume the situation of adjectives, of the nature of which they very much partake; but they are also employed frequently to introduce clauses dependent on preceding verbs. "A loving father." "A learned man." "He passed through life, adored by his friends, and respected by all good men." (*Illus.* 2. *Art.* 59.)

4. Conjunctions are often introduced to connect single substantives, but more commonly to conjoin clauses of sentences. From their nature they require a situation between the things of which they form an union. (*Art.* 72.)

5. The interjection, finally, in a grammatical sense, is totally unconnected with every other word in a sentence. Its arrangement, of course, is altogether arbitrary, and cannot admit of any theory.—(*Art.* 73.)

6. If two adverbs attend upon a single verb, one significant of place or time, the other of some modification of the verb, the former is generally situated *before* the verb, the latter, more intimately connected with the verb, is placed immediately *after* it, to the exclusion even of the subject, when some circumstance depends upon the subject. "Cæsar often reprehended severely the ingratitude of his enemies." "He every where declared publicly his inclination to preserve the constitution of his country." (*Art.* 70.)

7. If one auxiliary attend a verb, along with one adverb, the adverb is generally placed between the auxiliary and the verb. "Folly has always exposed her author." "Wealth may often make friends, but can never produce true peace of mind."

8. If there be two auxiliaries, the adverb is commonly situated between them. "He should certainly have come." "He might easily have known." In passive sentences, however, the adverb is placed after both the auxiliaries; as, "He will be uncommonly agitated." "I shall be completely ruined." (*Art.* 70. *Illus.* 5.)

9. If there be three auxiliaries, when the sentence must again be passive, the adverb is placed after them all. "I might have been better informed." "He might have been completely educated in that branch of science." "It should have been well authenticated."

10. If two adverbs, with two auxiliaries, attend upon the same verb. the adverbs will be intermixed with the auxiliaries. "I have always been much embarrassed by these inconveniences." "He can never be sincerely disposed to promote peace." "He might at least have plainly told him."

11. In the arrangement of two or more prepositions, the relation of concomitance seems to be the most intimate, and, therefore, takes the

precedency of all others. "He went with him to France; he came with him from Rome; he lived with him at Naples, and fought with him in Flanders; he contended with him for fame, but fought with him against his enemies." The relation denoted by *from*, precedes that signified by *to*. "He came from Rome to Paris, and from Paris to London." "From a beginning very unpromising, he rose to great influence and wealth." "Society proceeds from barbarity to refinement, from ignorance to knowledge, from wealth to corruption, and from corruption to ruin."

Scholium. These principles are supported by the practice of our purest writers. It is our duty, therefore, to form our style on the most correct models before us, if we would avoid that fluctuating and unsettled imitation which is observable, when the ear is our chief guide, and its dictates are always variable, not seldom whimsical. In a matter of so much consequence, we may, it seems, follow with most confidence the example of the best writers and speakers, explained and supported by the analogies of grammar and of perspicuity. (*Art.* 80.)

CHAPTER III.

ON THE STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

146. THOUGH PERSPICUITY be the general head under which we are at present considering language, we shall not confine ourselves to this quality alone, in *sentences*, but inquire also, what is requisite for their *grace* and *beauty*.

Obs. Aristotle defines a sentence to be a form of speech which hath a beginning and an end within itself, and is of such a length as to be easily comprehended at once.* This, however, admits of a great latitude. For a sentence, or period, consists always of component parts, which are called its members; and as these members may be either few or many, and may be connected in several different ways, the same thought, or mental proposition, may often be either brought into one sentence, or split into two or three, without the material breach of any rule. (*Art.* 141. *and* 142.)

147. The first variety that occurs in the consideration of sentences, is, the distinction of *long* and *short* ones. The precise length of sentences, as to the number of words, or the number of members, which may enter into them, cannot be ascertained by any definite measure. At the same time, it is obvious, that there may be an extreme on either side.

Illus. Sentences, immoderately long, and consisting of too many members, always transgress some one or other of the rules which are necessary to be observed in every good sentence. In discourses that are

* Λεξις εχουσα αρχην και τελευτην καθ' αυτην, και μεγεθος ευσυνοπτον.

to be spoken, regard must be had to the easiness of pronunciation, which is not consistent with too long periods. In compositions where pronunciation has no place, still, however, by using long periods too frequently, an author overloads and fatigues the reader's attention. For long periods require, evidently, more attention than short ones, in order to perceive clearly the connection of the several parts, and to take in the whole at one view. At the same time, in too many short sentences, also, there may be an excess, by which the sense is split and broken, the connection of thought weakened, and the memory burdened, by presenting to it a long succession of minute objects. (*Obs.* 2. *Art.* 148.)

Corol. According to the nature of the composition, therefore, and the general character it ought to bear, the one or other may be predominant. But, in almost every kind of composition, the great rule is to intermix them. For the attention tires of either of them when too long continued: whereas, it is gratified by a proper mixture of long and short periods, in which a certain sprightliness is joined with majesty of style. "It is not proper always to employ a continued train, and a sort of regular compass of phrases; but style ought to be often broken down into smaller members."*

148. This variety is of so great consequence, that it must be studied, not only in the succession of long and short sentences, but in the *structure* of either species of these sentences.

Illus. 1. A train of sentences, constructed in the same manner, and with the same number of members, whether long or short, should never be allowed to succeed one another. However musical each of them may be to a reader, it has a better effect to introduce even a discord, than to cloy the ear with the repetition of similar sounds: for, nothing is so tiresome as perpetual uniformity. (*Art.* 116. *Illus.* 1, 2. *Crit. I. and II.*)

149. The properties most essential to a perfect sentence, seem to be the four following: 1. Clearness and precision. 2. Unity. 3. Strength. 4. Harmony. Each of these we shall illustrate separately, and at some length.

Illus. The least failure in clearness and precision, which we consider the first essential properties to a perfect sentence, the least degree of ambiguity, which leaves the mind in any sort of suspense as to the meaning, ought to be avoided with the greatest care; nor is it so easy a matter to keep always clear of this, as one might, at first, imagine. Precision has already been considered; we shall here consider ambiguity as it arises either from a wrong choice of words, or a wrong collocation of them. In Chapter IV. this subject will be handled in its most extensive signification.

Corol. Hence a capital rule in the arrangement of sentences is, that the words or members most nearly related, should be placed in the sentence, as near to each other as possible; so as to make their mutual relation clearly appear. This is a rule not always observed as strictly as it ought to be, even by good writers. It will be necessary

* "Non semper utendum est perpetuitate, et quasi conversione verborum; sed sæpe carpenda membris minutioribus oratio est." *Cicero.*

to produce some instances, which will both shew the importance of this rule, and make the application of it understood. (*Art.* 121.)

150. First, in the position of adverbs, which are used to qualify the signification of something that either precedes or follows them, there is often a good deal of nicety. (*Art.* 121. *and Illus.*)

Illus. "The Romans understood liberty, at least, as well as we."* These words are capable of two different senses, according as the emphasis, in reading them, is laid upon *liberty*, or upon *at least*. In the first case, they will signify, that whatever other things we may understand better than the Romans, *liberty*, at least, was one thing which they understood as well as we. In the second case, they will import, that liberty was understood *at least* as well by them as by us; meaning, that by them it was better understood. If this last, as I make no doubt, was Dean Swift's own meaning, the ambiguity would have been avoided, and the sense rendered independent of the manner of pronouncing, by arranging the words thus: "the Romans understood liberty, as well, at least, as we." (*Art.* 70. *Illus.* 5.)

Corol. With respect, then, to such adverbs, as, *only*, *wholly*, *at least*, and the rest of that tribe, which we use in common discourse, the tone and emphasis with which we pronounce them, generally serve to shew their reference, and to make their meaning clear; and hence, we acquire a habit of throwing them in loosely in the course of a period. But, in writing, where a man speaks to the eye and not to the ear, he ought to be more accurate; and so to connect those adverbs with the words which they qualify, as to put his meaning out of doubt upon the first inspection. (*Illus.* 11. *Art.* 124.)

151. Secondly, When a circumstance is interposed in the middle of a sentence, it sometimes requires attention how to place it, so as to divest it of all ambiguity.

Illus. "Are these designs, which any man, who is born a Briton, in any circumstances, in any situation, ought to be ashamed or afraid to avow?"† Here we are left at a loss, whether these words, "*in any circumstances, in any situation*," are connected with "a man born in Britain, in any circumstances, or situation," or with that man's "avowing his designs, in any circumstances, or situation into which he may be brought?" If the latter, as seems most probable, was intended to be the meaning, the arrangement ought to have been conducted thus: "Are these designs, which any man who is born a Briton, ought to be ashamed or afraid to avow in any circumstances, in any situation?" But,

152. Thirdly, Still more attention is required to the proper disposition of the relative pronouns, *who*, *which*, *what*, *whose*, and of all those particles which express the connexion of the parts of speech with one another. As all reasoning depends upon this connexion, we cannot here be too accurate and precise. A small error may overcloud the

* Swift's Project for the Advancement of Religion.
† Bolingbroke's Dissert. on Parties.

meaning of the whole sentence; and even where the meaning is intelligible, if these relative particles be out of their proper place, we always find something awkward and disjointed in the structure of the sentence.

Illus. 1. "This kind of wit was very much in vogue among our countrymen, about an age or two ago, who did not practice it for any oblique reason, but purely for the sake of being witty."* We are at no loss about the meaning here; but the construction would evidently be mended by disposing of the circumstance, "about an age or two ago," in such a manner as not to separate the relative *who* from its antecedent *our countrymen*. Thus, "about an age or two ago, this kind of wit was very much in vogue among our countrymen, who did not practice it for any oblique reason, but purely for the sake of being witty."

2. Of the like nature is the following inaccuracy of Dean Swift. He is recommending to young clergymen to write their sermons fully and distinctly. "Many," says he, "act so directly contrary to this method, that from a habit of saving time and paper, which they acquired at the university, they write in so diminutive a manner, that they can hardly read what they have written." He certainly does not mean, that they had acquired time and paper at the university, but that they had acquired this habit of saving both time and paper there; and therefore his words ought to have run thus: "From a habit which they have acquired at the university of saving time and paper, they write in so diminutive a manner."

Scholia. Several other instances might be given; but those which we have produced may be sufficient to make the rule understood.

I. Namely, that in the construction of sentences one of the first things to be attended to, is, the marshalling of the words in such order as shall most clearly mark the relation of the several parts of the sentence to one another.

Particularly, that adverbs shall always be made to adhere closely to the words which they are intended to qualify.

II. That, where a circumstance is thrown in, it shall never hang loose in the midst of a period, but be determined by its place to one or other of the members in that period.

III. And that every relative word which is used, shall instantly present its antecedent to the mind of the reader, without the least obscurity.

In these three cases are contained some of the most frequent occasions of ambiguity creeping into sentences. (*But see Chapters IV, V, VI, VII, and VIII, of this book.*)

153. With regard to relatives, we must farther observe, that obscurity often arises from the too frequent repetition of them, particularly of the pronouns *who*, and *they*, and *them*, and *theirs*, when we have occasion to refer to different persons.

Illus. 1. "Men look with an evil eye upon the good that is in others; and think that their reputation obscures them, and their commendable qualities stand in their light; and therefore they do what

* Spectator, No. 54.

they can to cast a cloud over them, that the bright shining of their virtues may not obscure them."*

This is altogether careless writing. It renders style often obscure, always embarrassed and inelegant. When we find these personal pronouns crowding too fast upon us, we have often no method left, but to throw the whole sentence into some other form, which may avoid those frequent references to persons who have before been mentioned.

2. All languages are liable to ambiguities. Quinctilian gives us some instances in the Latin, arising from faulty arrangements. A man, he tells us, ordered, by his will, to have erected for him, after his death, "Statuam auream hastam tenentem;" upon which arose a dispute at law, whether the whole statue, or the spear only, was to be of gold?

3. The same author observes, very properly, that a sentence is always faulty, when the collocation of the words is ambiguous, though the sense can be gathered. If any one should say, "Chremetem audivi percussise Demeam;" this is ambiguous, both in sense and structure, whether Chremes or Demea gave the blow.

Corol. Hence, to have the relation of every word and member of a sentence marked in the most proper and distinct manner, gives not clearness only, but grace and beauty to a sentence, making the mind pass smoothly and agreeably along all the parts of it. (*Corol. Art.* 149.)

154. UNITY is the second quality of a well-arranged sentence. This is a capital property. In every composition, of whatever kind, some degree of unity is required, in order to render it beautiful. There must be always some connecting principle among the parts. Some one object must reign and be predominant.

Obs. This holds in history, in epic and dramatic poetry, and in all orations. But most of all, in a single sentence, is required the strictest unity. For the very nature of a sentence implies one proposition to be expressed. It may consist of parts, indeed; but these parts must be so closely bound together, as to make upon the mind the impression of one object, not of many. Now, in order to preserve this unity of a sentence, the following rules must be observed.

155. In the first place, during the course of the sentence, the scene should be changed as little as possible. We should not be hurried by sudden transitions from person to person, nor from subject to subject. There is commonly, in every sentence, some person or thing, that is the governing word. This should be continued so, if possible, from the beginning to the end of the sentence.

Illus. Should I express myself thus: "After we came to anchor, they put me on shore, where I was welcomed by all my friends, who received me with the greatest kindness." Though the objects contained in this sentence, have a sufficient connection with each other,

* Tillotson, Vol. I. Serm. 42.

yet, by this manner of representing them, by shifting so often both the place and the person, *we*, and *they*, and *I*, and *who*, they appear in such a disunited view, that the sense of the sentence is almost lost. The sentence is restored to its proper unity, by turning it after the following manner: "Having come to an anchor, I was put on shore, where I was welcomed by all my friends, and received with the greatest kindness." Writers who transgress this rule, for the most part transgress, at the same time,

156. A second rule; never crowd into one sentence, things which have so little connection, that they could bear to be divided into two or three sentences. The violation of this rule never fails to injure the style, and displease the reader. Its effect, indeed, is so disagreeable, that of the two, it is the safer extreme, to err rather by too many short sentences, than by one that is overloaded and embarrassed.

Illus. 1. Examples abound in our own authors. We shall produce some, to justify what we have said. "Archbishop Tillotson," says an Author of the History of England, "died in this year. He was exceedingly beloved both by King William and Queen Mary, who nominated Dr. Tennison, Bishop of Lincoln, to succeed him." Who would expect the latter part of this sentence to follow, in consequence of the former? "He was exceedingly beloved by both King and Queen," is the proposition of the sentence: we look for some proof of this, or at least something related to it, to follow; when we are on a sudden carried off to a new proposition, "who nominated Dr. Tennison to succeed him."

2. The following is from Middleton's Life of Cicero: "In this uneasy state, both of his public and private life, Cicero was oppressed by a new and cruel affliction, the death of his beloved daughter Tullia; which happened soon after her divorce from Dolabella, whose manners and humours were entirely disagreeable to her." The principal object in this sentence is, the death of Tullia, which was the cause of her father's affliction; the date of it, as happening soon after her divorce from Dolabella, may enter into the sentence with propriety; but the subjunction of Dolabella's character is foreign to the main object, and totally breaks the unity and compactness of the sentence, by setting a new picture before the reader. (*Art.* 149.)

3. The following sentence, from a translation of Plutarch, is still worse: speaking of the Greeks under Alexander, the author says, "Their march was through an uncultivated country, whose savage inhabitants fared hardly, having no other riches than a breed of lean sheep, whose flesh was rank and unsavory, by reason of their continual feeding upon sea-fish." Here the scene is changed upon us again and again. The march of the Greeks, the description of the inhabitants through whose country they travelled, the account of these people's riches lying wholly in sheep, and the cause of their sheep being ill-tasted food, form a jumble of objects, slightly related to each other, which the reader cannot, without much difficulty, comprehend under one view. (*Cor. Art.* 149.)

157. A third rule, for preserving the unity of sentences, is, to avoid all parentheses in the middle of them. In some

occasions, they may have a spirited appearance; as prompted by a certain vivacity of thought, which can glance happily aside, as it is going along. (*Art.* 187.)

Obs. For the most part, their effect is not always spirited: nay, sometimes it is extremely bad. They seem a sort of wheels within wheels; sentences in the midst of sentences; the perplexed method of disposing of some thought, which a writer wants art to introduce in its proper place. It were needless to give any instances, as they occur so often among incorrect writers.

158. The fourth and last rule for the unity of a sentence, is, to bring it always to a full and perfect close. Every thing that is one, should have a beginning, a middle and an end. An unfinished sentence is no sentence at all, according to any grammatical rule.

Obs. But we very often meet with sentences, that are, so to speak, more than finished. When we have arrived at what we expected was to be the conclusion, when we are come to the word on which the mind, by what went before, is naturally led to rest; unexpectedly, some circumstance appears, which ought to have been omitted, or to have been disposed of elsewhere; but which is left lagging behind, like a tail adjected to the sentence. This looks to the rhetorician's eye, as does to the naturalist's the prodigious tail which the rude hand of early astronomy has given to the constellation Ursa Major.

159. The *third quality* of a correct sentence, is STRENGTH. By this is meant such a disposition of the several words and members, as shall bring out the sense to the best advantage; as shall render the impression which the period is designed to make, most full and complete; and give every word, and every member, its due weight and force. (*Example. Art.* 173.)

Obs. The two former qualities of perspicuity and unity, are, no doubt, absolutely necessary to the production of this effect; but more is still requisite. For a sentence may be clear enough, it may also be compact enough in all its parts, or have the requisite unity; and yet, by some unfavourable circumstance in the structure, it may fail in that strength or liveliness of impression which a more happy arrangement would have produced.

160. The first rule for promoting the strength of a sentence, is, to divest it of all *redundant* words. These may, sometimes, be consistent with a considerable degree both of clearness and unity; but they are always enfeebling. (*See Art.* 121.)

Illus. It is a general maxim, that any words which do not add some importance to the meaning of a sentence, always spoil it. They cannot be superfluous, without being hurtful. All that can be easily supplied in the mind, is better left out in the expression. Thus: "Content with deserving a triumph, he refused the honor of it," is better lan-

guage than to say, "Being content with deserving a triumph, he refused the honor of it."

Corol. One of the most useful exercises of correction, upon reviewing what we have written or composed, is therefore to contract that round-about method of expression, and to lop off those useless excrescences which are commonly found in a first draught. Here a severe eye should be employed; and we shall always find our sentences acquire more vigour and energy when thus retrenched; provided always, that we run not into the extreme of pruning so very close, as to give a hardness and dryness to style. For here, as in all other things, there is a due medium. Some regard, though not the principal, must be had to fulness and swelling of sound. Some leaves must be left to surround and shelter the fruit.

161. As sentences should be cleared of *redundant words*, so also of *redundant members*. As every word ought to present a *new idea*, so every member ought to contain a *new thought*. Opposed to this, stands the fault with which we sometimes meet, of the last member of a period being nothing else than the echo of the former, or the repetition of it in a different form. For example; speaking of beauty,

Illus. Mr. Addison says, "The very first discovery of it, strikes the mind with inward joy, and spreads delight through all its faculties*." And elsewhere, "It is impossible for us to behold the divine works with coldness or indifference, or to survey so many beauties, without a secret satisfaction and complacency†." In both these instances, little or nothing is added by the second member of the sentence to what was already expressed in the first: and though the free and flowing manner of such an author as Mr. Addison, and the graceful harmony of his periods, may palliate such negligences; yet, in general, it holds, that style, freed from this prolixity, appears both more strong and more beautiful. The attention becomes remiss, the mind falls into inaction, when words are multiplied without a corresponding multiplication of ideas. (*See Crit.* 1. *and* 2. *p.* 71.)

162. After removing superfluities, the second rule for promoting the strength of a sentence, is, to attend particularly to the use of *copulatives, relatives*, and all the *particles* mployed for *transition* and *connection*.

Illus. These little words, *but, and, which, whose, where*, &c. are frequently the most important words of any; they are the joints or hinges upon which all sentences turn, and, of course, much, both of the gracefulness and the strength of sentences, must depend upon the proper use of such particles. The varieties in using them are, indeed, so numerous, that no particular system of rules can be given respecting them. Attention to the practice of the most accurate writers, joined with frequent trials of the different effects produced by a different usage of those particles, must here direct us. (*Art.* 145. *Illus.* 1—11.)

163. What is called *splitting of particles*, or separating

* Spectator, No. 412. † Ibid. No. 413.

a preposition from the noun which it governs, is always to be avoided. (*Illus.* 11. *Art.* 145.)

Illus. "Though virtue borrows no assistance from, yet it may often be accompanied by, the advantages of fortune." In pronouncing this instance we feel a sort of pain from the revulsion, or violent separation of two things, which by their nature, should be closely united. We are put to a stand in thought; being obliged to rest for a little on the preposition by itself, which, at the same time, carries no significancy, till it is joined to its proper substantive noun.

164. Some writers needlessly multiply demonstrative and relative particles, by the frequent use of such phraseology as the following:

Illus. "There is nothing which disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp of language." In introducing a subject, or laying down a proposition to which we demand particular attention, this sort of style is very proper; but in the ordinary current of discourse, it is better to express ourselves more simply and shortly: "Nothing disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp of language."

165. Other writers make a practice of omitting the relative, by adopting a phraseology of a different kind from the former. This error springs from the absurd supposition that, without this omission, the meaning could not be understood.

Illus. "The man I love."—"The dominions we possessed, and the conquests we made." But though this elliptical style be intelligible, and allowable in conversation and epistolary writing, yet in all writings of a serious or dignified kind, it is ungraceful. There, the relative should always be inserted in its proper place, and the construction filled up: as, "The man whom I love."—"The dominions which we possessed, and the conquests which we made."

166. With regard to the copulative particle, *and*, which occurs so frequently in all kinds of composition, several observations are to be made. First, it is evident, that the unnecessary repetition of this particle enfeebles style. It has much the same effect as the frequent use of the vulgar phrase, *and so*, when one is telling a story in common conversation.

Illus. 1. We shall, for one instance, take a sentence from Sir William Temple. He is speaking of the refinement of the French language: "The academy set up by Cardinal Richelieu, to amuse the wits of that age and country, and to divert them from raking into his politics and ministry, brought this into vogue; and the French wits have, for this last age, been wholly turned to the refinement of their style and language; and, indeed, with such success, that it can hardly be equalled, and runs equally through their verse and their prose." Here are no fewer than eight *ands* in one sentence. This agreeable writer too often makes his sentences drag in this manner, by a careless multiplication of copulatives.

2. It is strange that a writer so accurate as Dean Swift, should have stumbled on so improper an application of this particle, as he has made in the following sentence: "There is no talent so useful towards rising in the world, or which puts men more out of the reach of fortune, than that quality generally possessed by the dullest sort of people, and is, in common language, called discretion; a species of lower prudence, by the assistance of which,"* &c. By the insertion of, *and is*, in place of, *which is*, he has not only clogged the sentence, but even made it ungrammatical.

167. But, in the next place, it is worthy of observation, that though the natural use of the conjunction, *and*, be to join objects, and thereby make their connection more close; yet, in fact, by dropping the conjunction, we often mark a closer connection, a quicker succession of objects, than when it is inserted between them.

Illus. 1. Longinus makes this remark; which, from many instances, appears to be just: "Veni, vidi, vici,"† expresses with more spirit the rapidity and quick succession of conquest, than if connecting particles had been used.

2. So, in the following description of a rout in Cæsar's Commentaries, the omission of the connective particle gives great force to the sentence: "Nostri, emissis pilis, gladiis rem gerunt; repentè post tergum equitatus cernitur; cohortes aliæ appropinquant. Hostes terga; vertunt; fugientibus equites occurrunt; fit magna cædes."‡ Bell. Gall. lib. 7.

168. On the other hand, when we seek to prevent a quick transition from one object to another—when we are making some enumeration in which we wish that the objects should appear as distinct from each other as possible, and that the mind should rest, for a moment, on each object by itself, copulatives may be multiplied with peculiar advantage and grace.

Illus. As when Lord Bolingbroke says, "Such a man might fall a victim to power; but truth, and reason, and liberty would fall with him."

In the same manner, Cæsar describes an engagement with the Nervii: "His equitibus facile pulsis ac proturbatis, incredibile celeritate ad flumen decurrerunt; ut pene uno tempore, et ad sylvas, et in flumine, et jam in manibus nostris, hostes viderentur."§ Bell. Gall. 1. 2.

Here, although he is describing a quick succession of events, yet as it is his intention to shew in how many places the enemy seemed to be at one time, the copulative is very happily redoubled, in order to paint more strongly the distinction of these several places.

* Essay on the Fates of Clergymen. †"I came, I saw, I conquered."

‡ "Our men, after having discharged their javelins, attack with sword in hand; of a sudden the cavalry make their appearance behind; other bodies of men are seen drawing near; the enemies turn their backs; the horse meet them in their flight; a great slaughter ensues."

§ "The enemy, having easily beat off and scattered this body of horse, ran down with incredible celerity to the river, so that, almost at one moment of time, they appeared to be in the woods, and in the river, and in the midst of our troops."

Scholia. This attention to the several cases, when it is proper to *omit*, and when to *redouble* the *copulative*, is of considerable importance to all who study eloquence. For it is a remarkable particularity in language, that the omission of a connecting particle should sometimes serve to make objects appear more closely connected: and that the repetition of it should distinguish and separate them in some measure from each other. Hence, the omission of it is used to denote rapidity; and the repetition of it is designed to retard and to aggravate. The reason seems to be, that, in the former case, the mind is supposed to be hurried through a quick succession of objects, without gaining leisure to point out their connection; it drops the copulative in its hurry; and crowds the whole series together, as if the objects were but one. Whereas, when we enumerate, with a view to aggravate, the mind is supposed to proceed with a more slow and solemn pace; it marks fully the relation of each object to that which succeeds it; and by joining them together with several copulatives, makes us perceive, that the objects, though connected, are yet, in themselves, distinct; that they are many, not one. Observe, for instance, in the following enumeration made by the apostle Paul, what additional weight and distinctness are given to each particular by the repetition of a conjunction. "I am persuaded that *neither* death, *nor* life, *nor* angels, *nor* principalities, *nor* powers, *nor* things present, *nor* things to come, *nor* height, *nor* depth, *nor* any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God."* So much with regard to the use of copulatives.

169. A third rule for promoting the strength of a sentence, is, to dispose of the capital word, or words, in that place of the sentence where it or they will make the fullest impression.

Illus. Every one must see, that there are in every sentence such capital words, on which the meaning principally rests; and it is equally plain, that these words should possess a conspicuous and distinguished place. But that place of the sentence where they will make the best figure, whether the beginning or the end, or sometimes, even the middle, cannot perhaps be ascertained by any precise rule. This must vary with the nature of the sentence.

170. Perspicuity must ever be studied in the first place, and the nature of our language allows no great liberty in the choice of collocation. For the most part, with us, the important words are placed in the beginning of the sentence.

Illus. "The pleasures of the imagination, taken in their full extent, are not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding."† And this, indeed, seems the most plain and natural order, to place that in the front which is the chief object of the proposition we are laying down. Sometimes, however, when we intend to give weight to a sentence, it is of advantage to suspend the meaning for a little, and then bring it out full at the close: "Thus," says Pope, "on whatever side we contemplate Homer, what principally strikes us, is his wonderful invention."‡

* Rom. viii. 38, 39. † Addison. ‡ Preface to Homer.

171. The Greek and Latin writers had a considerable advantage above us, in this part of style. By the great liberty of inversion, which their languages permitted, they could choose the most advantageous situation for every word; and had it thereby in their power to give their sentences more force.

Obs. Milton, in his prose works, and some other of our old English writers, endeavour to imitate them in this. But the forced constructions which they employed, produced obscurity; and the genius of our language, as it is now written and spoken, will not admit such liberties. Gordon, who followed this inverted style, in his translation of Tacitus, has, sometimes, done such violence to the language, as even to appear ridiculous; as in this expression: "Into this hole thrust themselves, three Roman senators." He has translated so simple a phrase as, "Nullum eâ tempestate bellum," by, "War at that time there was none."

172. However, within certain bounds, and to a limited degree, our language does admit of inversions; and they are practised with success by the best writers.

We shall just glance at one example here, as *inversion* will be treated subsequently to *harmony*. *(See Chapter X.)*

Illus. Pope, speaking of Homer, says, "The praise of judgment Virgil has justly contested with him, but his invention remains yet unrivalled." It is evident, that, in order to give the sentence its due force, by contrasting properly the two capital words, "judgment and invention," this is a happier arrangement than if he had followed the natural order, which was, "Virgil has justly contested with him the praise of judgment, but his invention remains yet unrivalled."

Obs. Some writers practise this degree of inversion, which our language bears, much more than others; Lord Shaftesbury, for instance, much more than Mr. Addison: and to this sort of arrangement, is owing, in a great measure, that appearance of strength, dignity, and varied harmony, which Lord Shaftesbury's style possesses.

173. But whether we practise inversion or not, and in whatever part of the sentence we dispose of the capital words, it is always a point of great moment, that these capital words shall stand clear and disentangled from any other words that would clog them.

Illus. Thus, when there are any circumstances of time, place, or other limitations, which the principal object of our sentence requires to have connected with it, we must take especial care to dispose of them, so as not to cloud that principal object, nor to bury it under a load of circumstances.

Example. Lord Shaftesbury, speaking of modern poets, as compared with the ancient, says: "If, whilst they profess only to please, they secretly advise, and give instruction, they may now, perhaps, as well as formerly, be esteemed, with justice, the best and most honourable among authors." This is a well constructed sentence. It contains a great many circumstances and adverbs, necessary to qualify the meaning; *only, secretly, now, perhaps, as well, formerly, with justice;*

yet these are placed with so much art, as neither to embarrass nor weaken the sentence; while that which is the capital object in it, viz. "Poets being justly esteemed the best and most honourable among authors," comes out in the conclusion clear and detached, and possesses its proper place.

174. A fourth rule for constructing sentences with proper strength, is, to make the *members* of them go on *rising* and *growing* in their importance above one another.

Illus. This sort of arrangement is called a climax, and is always considered as a beauty in composition. From what cause it pleases, is abundantly evident. In all things, we naturally love to ascend to what is more and more beautiful, rather than to follow the retrograde order. Having had once some considerable object set before us, it is, with pain, we are pulled back to attend to an inferior circumstance. "Care must be taken that our composition shall not fall off, and that a weaker expression shall not follow one of more strength; as if, after sacrilege, we should bring in theft; or, having mentioned a robbery, we should subjoin petulance. Sentences ought always to rise and grow."*

2. Of this beauty, in the construction of sentences, the orations of Cicero furnish many examples. His pompous manner naturally led him to study it; and, generally in order to render the climax perfect, he makes both the sense and the sound rise together, with a very magnificent swell.

3. The following instance from Lord Bolingbroke, is beautiful: "This decency, this grace, this propriety of manners to character, is so essential to princes in particular, that, whenever it is neglected, their virtues lose a great degree of lustre, and their defects acquire much aggravation. Nay, more; by neglecting this decency and this grace, and for want of a sufficient regard to appearances, even their virtues may betray them into failings, their failings into vices, and their vices into habits unworthy of princes, and unworthy of men."†

175. This sort of full and oratorical climax, can neither be always obtained, nor ought it to be always sought after. Only some kinds of writing admit such sentences; and to study them too frequently, especially if the subject do not require much pomp, is affected and disagreeable. But when sentences are approaching to a climax, the following is a general rule which we ought to study.

Illus. 1. A weaker assertion or proposition should never come after a stronger one;‡ and when our sentence consists of two members, the longest should, generally, be the concluding one. There is a two-fold reason for this last direction. Periods thus divided, are pronounced more easily; and the shortest member being placed first, we carry it more readily in our memory as we proceed to the second, and see the connection of the two more clearly. Thus, to say, "when our pas-

* "Cavendum est ne decrescat oratio, et fortiori subjungatur aliquid infirmius; sicut, sacrilegio, fur; aut latroni petulans. Augeri enim debent sententiæ et insurgere." Quinctilian.

† Idea of a Patriot King.

‡ "Ne decrescat oratio, et ne fortiori subjungatur aliquid infirmius." Quinct.

sions have forsaken us, we flatter ourselves with the belief that we have forsaken them," is both more graceful and more clear, than to begin with the longest part of the proposition, and say : " We flatter ourselves with the belief that we have forsaken our passions, when they have forsaken us."

2. In general, it is always agreeable to find a sentence rising upon us, and growing in its importance to the very last word, when this construction can be managed without affectation or unseasonable pomp. " If we rise yet higher," says Addison, very beautifully, " and consider the fixed stars as so many oceans of flame, that are each of them attended with a different set of planets ; and still discover new firmaments and new lights, that are sunk farther in those unfathomable depths of æther ; we are lost in such a labyrinth of suns and worlds, and confounded with the magnificence and immensity of nature."* Hence follows clearly,

176. A fifth rule for the strength of sentences ; which is, to *avoid concluding* them with an *adverb*, a *preposition*, or *any inconsiderable word*. Such conclusions are always enfeebling and degrading.

Obs. There are sentences, indeed, where the stress and significancy rest chiefly upon some words of this kind. In this case they are not to be considered as circumstances, but as the capital figures ; and ought, in propriety, to have the principal place allotted them. No fault, for instance, can be found with this sentence : " In their prosperity, my friends shall never hear of me ; in their adversity, always."† Where *never*, and *always*, being emphatical words, were to be so placed, as to make a strong impression. But we speak now of those inferior parts of speech, when introduced as circumstances, or as qualifications of more important words. In such a case they should always be disposed of in the least conspicuous parts of the period ; and so classed with other words of greater dignity, as to be kept in their proper and secondary station.

177. Agreeably to this rule, we should always avoid concluding with any of those particles which mark the cases of nouns ; as, *of, to, from, with, by.*

Illus. For instance, it is a great deal better to say, " Avarice is a crime of which wise men are often guilty," than to say, " Avarice is a crime which wise men are often guilty of." This last is a phraseology that, with reason, all correct writers shun : for, besides the want of dignity which arises from those monosyllables at the end, the imagination cannot avoid resting, for a little, on the import of the word that closes the sentence : and, as prepositions have no import of their own, but only serve to point out the relations of other words, it is disagreeable for the mind to be left pausing on a word, which does not, by itself, produce any idea, nor form any picture in the fancy.

178. For the same reason, *verbs* which are *used* in a compound sense, *with* some of the *prepositions*, are *not beautiful conclusions* of a period. Such verbs as, *bring about,*

* Spectator, No. 420. † Bolingbroke.

lay hold of, come over to, clear up, and many other of this kind ought to be avoided, if we can employ a simple verb, which will always terminate the sentence with more strength.

Obs. Though the pronoun, *it,* has the import of a substantive noun, and indeed often forces itself upon us unavoidably, yet, when we want to give dignity to a sentence, this pronoun should, if possible, be avoided in the conclusion; more especially when it is joined with some of the prepositions, as, *with it, in it, to it.*

179. Besides particles and pronouns, any phrase, which expresses a circumstance only, always brings up the rear of a sentence with a bad grace.

Illus. We may judge of this, by the following sentence from Lord Bolingbroke: "Let me therefore conclude by repeating, that division has caused all the mischief we lament; that union alone can retrieve us; and that a great advance towards this union was the coalition of parties, so happily begun, so successfully carried on, and of late so unaccountably neglected; to say no worse."* This last phrase *to say no worse,* occasions a sad falling off at the end; so much the more unhappy, as the rest of the period is conducted after the manner of a climax, which we expect to find growing to the last.

Obs. 1. The proper disposition of such circumstances in a sentence, is often attended with considerable trouble, in order to adjust them so, that they consist equally with the perspicuity and the grace of the period. Though necessary parts, they are, however, like unshapely stones in a building, which, to place them with the least offence, try the skill of an artist. "Let them be inserted wherever the happiest place for them can be found; as, in a structure composed of rough stones, there are always places where the most irregular and unshapely may find some adjacent one to which it can be joined, and some basis on which it may rest."†

2. The close is always an unsuitable place for them. When the sense admits their arrangement, the sooner they are despatched, generally speaking, the better; that the more important and significant words may possess the last place, quite disencumbered. It is a rule too, never to crowd too many circumstances together, but rather to interperse them in different parts of the sentence, joined with the capital words on which they depend; provided that care be taken, as was before directed, not to clog those capital words with them.

180. The last rule, which we have to offer, relating to the strength of a sentence, is, that in the members of a sentence where two things are compared or contrasted with each other; where either a resemblance or an opposition is intended to be expressed; some *resemblance,* in the *language* and *construction, should be preserved.* For, when the *things themselves correspond* to each other, we natur-

* Letter on the State of Parties at the Accession of King George I.

† "Jungantur quo congruunt maxime; sicut in structura saxorum rudium, etiam ipsa enormitas invenit cui applicari, et in quo possit insistere." Quinctilian.

ally expect to find the *words also corresponding.* We are disappointed when it is otherwise ; and the comparison, or contrast, appears more imperfect.

Illus. The following passage from Pope's Preface to his Homer, fully exemplifies the rule we have now given : " Homer was the greater genius ; Virgil the better artist ; in the one, we most admire the man ; in the other, the work. Homer hurries us with a commanding impetuosity ; Virgil leads us with an attractive majesty. Homer scatters with a generous profusion ; Virgil bestows with a careful magnificence. Homer, like the Nile, pours out his riches with a sudden overflow ; Virgil, like a river in its banks, with a constant stream.——And when we look upon their machines, Homer seems like his own Jupiter in his terrors, shaking Olympus, scattering the lightnings, and firing the heavens ; Virgil, like the same power in his benevolence, counselling with the gods, laying plans for empires, and ordering his whole creation."

Corol. Periods thus constructed, when introduced with propriety, and not returning too often, have a sensible beauty. But we must beware of carrying our attention to this beauty too far. It ought only to be occasionally studied, when it is naturally demanded by the comparison or opposition of objects. If such a construction as this be aimed at in all our sentences, it leads to a disagreeable uniformity ; produces a regularly returning clink in the period, which plainly discovers affectation, and tires the ear like the chime of jingling verse.

Scholia. The fundamental rule for the construction of sentences, and into which all other rules might be resolved, undoubtedly is, to communicate, in the clearest and most natural order, the ideas which we mean to transfuse into the minds of our hearers or readers. Every arrangement that does most justice to the sense, and expresses it to most advantage, strikes us as beautiful. To this point have tended all the rules that we have given. And, indeed, did men always think clearly, and were they, at the same time, fully masters of the language in which they write, there would be occasion for few rules. Their sentences would then, of course, acquire all those properties of precision, unity, and strength, which we have recommended. " For we may rest assured," says Dr. Blair,* " that, whenever we express ourselves ill, there is, besides the mismanagement of language, for the most part, some mistake in our manner of conceiving the subject. Embarrassed, obscure, and feeble sentences, are generally, if not always, the result, of embarrassed, obscure, and feeble thought. Thought and language act and re-act upon each other mutually. Logic and rhetoric have here, as in many other cases, a strict connection ; and he that is learning to arrange his sentences with accuracy and order, is learning at the same time, to think with accuracy and order ;" an observation which alone will justify all the care and attention which we have bestowed on this subject.

* Lectures on Rhetoric, Lect. XII.

CHAPTER IV.

PERSPICUITY.

181. PERSPICUTIY originally and properly signifies *transparency*, such as may be ascribed to air, glass, water, or any other medium, through which material objects are viewed. From this original and proper sense, it hath been metaphorically applied to language, this being, as it were, the medium, through which we perceive the notions and sentiments of any speaker or writer.

Illus. 1. Now, in natural things, if the medium through which we look at any object, be perfectly transparent, our whole attention is fixed on the object. If, for instance, we look through the panes of glass in any window, we are scarcely sensible that there is a medium which intervenes, and can hardly be said to perceive the medium. But if there be any flaw in the glass, if we see through it but dimly, if the object be imperfectly represented, or if we know it to be misrepresented, our attention is immediately taken off the object, and turned to the medium. We are then desirous to discover the cause, either of the dim and confused representation, or of the misrepresentation of things which the medium exhibits, or that the defect in vision may be supplied by judgment.

2. The case of language is precisely similar. A discourse, then, excels in perspicuity, when the subject engrosses the attention of the hearer, and the diction is so little minded by him, that he can scarcely be said to be conscious that it is through this medium he sees into the speaker's thoughts.

3. On the contrary, the least obscurity, ambiguity, or confusion in the style, instantly removes the attention from the sentiment to the expression, and the hearer endeavours, by the aid of reflection, to correct the imperfections of the speaker's language. Whatever application he must give to the words, is, in fact, so much deducted from what he owes to the sentiments. Besides, the effort which the speaker thus requires his hearer to exert in a very close attention to the language, always weakens the effect, which the thoughts were intended to produce in the mind of the hearer.

4. Perspicuity is, of all qualities of style, the first and most essential. Every speaker does not propose to please the imagination, nor is every subject susceptible of those ornaments, which conduce to this purpose. Much less is it the aim of every speech, to agitate the passions. There are some occasions, therefore, in which variety, and many in which animation of style, are not necessary; nay, there are occasions on which the last especially would be improper. But whatever be the ultimate intention of the orator, to inform, to convince, to please, to move, or to persuade, still he must speak so as to be understood, or he speaks to no purpose. If he do not propose to convey certain sentiments into the minds of his hearers, by the aid of signs intelligible to them, he may as well declaim before them in an unknown tongue. This prerogative the intellect hath above all the other

faculties, that, whether it be or be not immediately addressed by the speaker, it must be regarded by him either ultimately or subordinately; ultimately, when the direct purpose of the discourse is information, or conviction; subordinately, when the end is pleasure, emotion, or persuasion.

5. Besides, in a discourse wherein either vivacity or animation is requisite, it is not every sentence that requires, or even admits, of either of these qualities; but every sentence ought to be perspicuous. The effect of all other qualities is lost without this. But this being to the understanding, what light is to the eye, ought to be diffused over the whole performance. And since perspicuity is more properly a rhetoricial than a grammatical quality, we shall point out the different ways in which a writer may fail to produce a style which shall answer the conditions of the definition we have given of perspicuity.

6. A man may, in respect of grammatical purity, speak unexceptionably, and yet speak *obscurely* and *ambiguously;* and though we cannot say, that a man may speak properly, and at the same time speak *unintelligibly;* yet this last case falls more naturally to be considered as an offence against perspicuity, than as a violation of propriety. (*Art.* 112, 117, *and* 124.) For when the meaning is not discovered, the particular impropriety cannot be pointed out. In the three different ways, therefore, just now mentioned, perspicuity may be violated.

182. *The obscure, from defect,* is the first offence against perspicuity, and may arise from *elliptical* expressions. This is the converse of precision. (*Art.* 118.)

Illus. In Greek and Latin, the frequent suppression of the substantive verb, and of the possessive and personal pronouns, furnishes instances of ellipses, which the idiom of most modern tongues, English and French particularly, will seldom admit. (*Illus.* 2. *Art.* 119.)

183. Often, indeed, the *affectation* of *conciseness,* often the *rapidity* of thought, natural to some writers, will *give rise* to still more *material defects* in the expression.

Example. "He is inspired with a true *sense of that function,* when chosen from a regard to the interests of piety and virtue."*

Analysis. Sense, in this passage, denotes an inward feeling, or the impression which some sentiment makes upon the mind. Now a function cannot be a sentiment impressed or felt. The expression is therefore defective, and ought to have read thus: "He is inspired with a true sense of the dignity, or of the importance, of that function."

Obs. Obscurities in style arise not merely from deficiency, but from excess of expression, and often from the bad choice of words. (*See Art.* 118, 119, *and* 123.)

184. *Bad arrrangement* is another source of obscurity. In this case, the construction is not sufficiently clear. One often, on first hearing the sentence, imagines, from the turn of it, that it ought to be construed one way, and on reflection finds that it must be construed another way. (*Art.* 143, 144, *and* 145.)

* Guardian, No. 53.

Example. "I have hopes, that when WILL confronts him, and *all the ladies in whose behalf he engages him*, cast kind looks and wishes of success at their champion, he will have some shame."*

Analysis. It is impossible not to imagine, on hearing the first part of this sentence, that WILL is to confront all the ladies; though afterwards we find it neecessary to construe this clause with the following verb. This confusion is removed at once, by repeating the adverb *when.*

"I have hopes, that when WILL confronts him, and when all the ladies cast kind looks," &c.

Corol. Bad arrangement may be justly termed a *constructive ambiguity.* The words are so disposed, in point of order, as would render them really ambiguous, if, in that construction, which the expression first suggests, any meaning were exhibited. As this is not the case, the faulty order of the words cannot properly be considered, as rendering the sentence ambiguous, but obscure.

185. *The same word used in different senses* in the same sentence, is another source of obscurity.

Example. "That he should be in earnest, it is hard to conceive; since any reasons of doubt, which he might have in this case, would have been reasons of doubt in the case of other men, who may give *more*, but canot give *more evident*, signs of thought, than their fellow-creatures."†

Analysis. This errs alike against perspicuity and elegance. The first word, *more*, is an adjective, the comparative of *many;* in an instant it is an adverb, and the sign of the comparative degree. As the reader is not apprised of this, the sentence must appear to him, on the first glance, a flat contradiction. (*Art.* 122. *Illus.* 1 *and* 2.)

Correction. "Who may give *more numerous*, but cannot give *more evident* signs:" or thus, "Who may give *more*, but cannot give *clearer* signs."

186. It is but seldom that the same pronoun can be used twice, or oftener, in the same sentence, in reference to different things, without darkening the expression. The signification of the personal, as well as of the relative pronouns, and even of the adverbs of place and time, must be determined by the things to which they relate. To use them, therefore, with reference to different things, is, in effect, to employ the same word in different senses; which, when it occurs in the same sentence, or in sentences closely connected, is rarely found entirely compatible with perspicuity. (*See Art.* 152. *Illus.*)

Example. "One may have an air *which* proceeds from a just sufficiency and knowedge of the matter before him, *which* may naturally produce some motions of his head and body, *which* might become the bench better than the bar."‡

Analysis. The pronoun *which* is here thrice used in three several senses; and it must require reflection to discover, that the first de-

* Spectator, No. 20. † Bolingbroke's Ph. Ess. I. Sec. 9. ‡ Guardian, No. 13.

notes *air*, the second, *sufficiency and knowledge*, and the third, *motions of the head and body.*

187. *From too artificial a structure of the sentence*, obscurity may arise. This happens when the structure of the sentence is too much complicated, or too artificial; or when the sense is too long suspended by parentheses. (*Scholia*, *p.* 93.)

Obs. A short parenthesis, introduced in a proper place, will not in the least hurt the clearness, and may add both to the vivacity, and to the energy, of the sentence. (*See Art.* 157.)

188. *Technical terms*, injudiciously introduced, is another source of darkness in composition. (*See Art.* 84. *Illus.*) But in treatises on the principles of any art, they are not only convenient, but even necessary. In ridicule too, if used sparingly, as in comedy or romance, they are allowable. (*Obs. V. Art.* 114.)

189. *Long Sentences* may be justly accounted liable to obscurity, since it is difficult to extend them, without involving some of the other faults before mentioned. And when a long period does not appear obscure, it will always be remarked, that all its principal members are similar in their structure, and would constitute so many distinct sentences, if they were not limited, by their reference to some common clause in the beginning or the end. (*See Art.* 138.)

CHAPTER V.

THE DOUBLE MEANING, OR EQUIVOCATION.

190. THE *double meaning.* Perspicuity may be violated, not only by obscurity, but also by double meaning. (*Art.* 119.)

Illus. The fault in this case is not that the sentence conveys darkly or imperfectly the author's meaning, but that it conveys also some other meaning which is not the author's. His words are susceptible of more than one interpretation. When this happens, it is always occasioned, either by using some expression which is equivocal; that is, which hath more meanings than the one which the author affixes to it; or by ranging the words in such an order, that the construction is rendered equivocal, or made to exhibit different senses. The former we term equivocation, the latter ambiguity. (*See Defin.* 19. p. 79.)

191. *Equivocation.* When the word denotes in compo-

sition, as in common language it generally denotes, the use of an equivocal word, or phrase, or other ambiguity, with an intention to deceive, it differs not essentially from a lie.

This offence falls under the reproof of the moralist, not the censure of the rhetorician.

192. Again, when the word denotes, as agreeably it may denote, that exercise of wit which consists in the playful use of any term or phrase in different senses, and which is denominated *pun*, it is amenable, indeed, to the tribunal of criticism, but it cannot be regarded as a violation of the laws of perspicuity.

It is neither with the liar nor the punster that we are concerned at present.

193. The only species of equivocation that comes under reprehension here, is that which takes place, when an author undesignedly employs an expression susceptible of a sense different from the sense he intends it should convey.

Obs. This fault has been illustrated in Articles 113, 121, 122, and 123.

194. The *equivocation* may be either in a *single word*, or in a *phrase*.

Illus. 1. The preposition *of* denotes sometimes the relation which any affection bears to its subject ;* sometimes the relation which it bears to its object.

Example. 1. Hence this expression of the Apostle has been observed to be equivocal : "I am persuaded that neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the love *of* God."† By *the love of God*, say interpreters, may be understood, either *God's love to us*, or *our love to God.*

2. As the preposition *of* sometimes denotes the relation of the effect to the cause, sometimes that of the accident to the subject ; from this duplicity of signification, there will also, in certain circumstances, arise a double meaning. "A little after the reformation *of* Luther,"‡ is a phrase which suggests as readily a change wrought *on* Luther as a change wrought *by* him. But the phraseology is intelligible when we apply the term *reformation* to the *schism* which Luther produced in the Catholic Church.

Illus. 2. The *conjunctions* shall furnish our second illustration.

Example. "They were both more ancient among the Persians than Zoroaster *or* Zerdusht."§

Analysis. The conjunction *or* is here equivocal. It serves either as a copulative to synonymous words, or as a disjunctive of different things. But Zoroaster and Zerdusht mean the same person, therefore the sentence is equivocal.

Corol. 1. If the first noun follows an article or a preposition, or

* That is, the person whose affection it is. † Romans viii. 38, &c.
‡ Swift's Mechanical Operations.
§ Bolingbroke's Substance of Letters to M. de Pouilly.

both ; the article, or the preposition, or both, should be repeated before the second, when the two nouns are intended to denote different things ; and should not be repeated, when they are intended to denote the same thing.

2. If there be neither article nor preposition before the first, and if it be the intention of the writer to use the particle *or* disjunctively, let the first noun be preceded by *either*, which will infallibly ascertain the meaning.

3. On the contrary, if, in such a dubious case, it be his design to use the particle as a copulative to synonymous words, the piece will rarely sustain a material injury, by omitting both the conjunction and synonyma.

Illus. 3. *Pronouns* may also be used equivocally.

Example. "She united the great body of the people in *her* and their common interest."*

Analysis. The word *her* may be either the possessive pronoun, or the accusative case of the personal pronoun. A very small alteration in the order totally removes the doubt. Say, "in their and *her* common interest." The word thus connected, can only be the possessive, as the author doubtless intended it should be in the passage quoted.

Illus. 4. *Substantives* are sometimes used equivocally.

Example. "Your Majesty has lost all hopes of any future excises by their *consumption*."†

Analysis. The word *consumption* has both an active sense and a passive. It means either the *act* of consuming, or the *state* of being consumed.

Correction. "Your Majesty has lost all hopes of levying any future excises on what they shall consume."

Illus. 5. *Adjectives* also are used equivocally.

Example. "As for such animals as are *mortal* or noxious, we have a right to destroy them."‡

Analysis. Indeed ! all men are *liable to death*, and all men are animals, but we have no right to destroy each other. The word *mortal*, therefore, in this sentence might be justly considered as improper; *(Art.* 117. *Illus.* 3.) for though it sometimes means destructive, or causing death, it is then almost invariably joined with some noun expressive of hurt or danger.

Illus. 6. *Verbs* often present a false sense more readily than the true.

Example. "The next refuge was to say it was *overlooked* by one man, and many passages wholly written by another."§

Analysis. The word *overlooked* sometimes signifies *revised*, and sometimes *neglected*. But the participle is used here in the former sense, therefore the word *revised* ought to have been preferred.

Illus. 7. In the next quotation the homonymous term may be either an *adjective* or an adverb, and admits a different sense in each acceptation.

Example. "Not *only* Jesuits can equivocate."‖

Analysis. If the word *only* is here an adverb, the sense is "to equivocate is not the only thing that Jesuits can do." This interpretation, though not Dryden's meaning, suits the construction. The proper and unequivocal meaning, though a prosaic expression of this sense,

* Idea of a Patriot King. † Guardian, No. 52. ‡ Ibid. No. 61.
§ Spectator, No. 19. ‖ Dryden's Hind and Panther.

is, "Jesuits can not only equivocate." Again, if the word *only* is here an adjective (and this doubtless is the author's meaning) the sense is, "Jesuits are not the only persons who can equivocate."

Illus. 8 *Equivocal phrases* are such as, *not the least, not the smallest*, which may signify "not any," as though one should say, *not even the least, not so much as the smallest;* and sometimes again *a very great*, as though it were expressed in this manner, *far from being the least or smallest.* Now since they are susceptible of two significations which are not only different, but contrary, they ought to be totally laid aside.

CHAPTER VI.

AMBIGUITY.

194. THE *double meaning* arises, not from the use of equivocal terms, but solely from the construction; and is therefore distinguished by the name *ambiguity.* (*See Art.* 190. *and Illus. also Art.* 151.)

Illus. In the use of *pronouns*, the reference to the antecedent should be so unquestionable, that no false meaning could possibly be suggested by the manner of construing the words, of which a sentence may be composed.

Examples. "Solomon, the son of David, *who* built the temple at Jerusalem, was the richest monarch that ever reigned over the Jewish people," and "Solomon, the son of David, *who* was persecuted by Saul, was the richest monarch."

Analysis. In these two instances, the *who* is similarly situated; yet in the former, it relates to the person first mentioned; in the latter, to the second. And some previous knowledge of the history of those kings is necessary to enable any reader to discover this relation to the one or to the other.

Correction. "Solomon, the son of David, and the builder of the temple of Jerusalem, was the richest monarch."

Example 2. The following quotation exhibits a triple sense, arising from the indeterminate use of the relative.

"Such were the centaurs of Ixion's race,
Who a bright cloud for Juno did embrace."*

Analysis. Who embraced the cloud, the *centaurs*, *Ixion*, or his *race*? The relative ought grammatically to refer rather to the *centaurs*, than to either of the other two, and least of all to *Ixion*, to whom it was intended to refer.

195. The relatives *who, which, that, whose* and *whom*, often create ambiguity, even when there can be no doubt in regard to the antecedent.

Illus. 1. These pronouns are sometimes explicative, sometimes determinative. They are explicative when they serve merely for the

* Denham's Progress of Learning.

illustration of the subject, by pointing out either some property, or some circumstance belonging to it, leaving it, however, to be understood in its full extent.

Examples. "Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble." "Godliness, which with contentment is great gain, has the promise both of the present life, and of the future."

Analysis. The clause, "who is born of a woman," in the first example, and "which with contentment is great gain," in the second, point to certain properties in the antecedent, but do not restrain their signification. For, should we omit these clauses altogether, we could say with equal truth, "Man is of few days, and full of trouble," "Godliness has the promise both of the present life, and of the future."

Illus. 2. On the other hand, these pronouns are determinative, when they are employed to limit the import of the antecedent.

Examples. "The man that endureth to the end shall be saved." "The remorse, which issues in reformation, is true repentance."

Analysis. Each of the relatives here confines the signification of its antecedent to such only as are possessed of the qualification mentioned. For it is not affirmed of every man that he shall be saved; nor of all remorse, that it is true repentance.

196. From the above examples, it may fairly be collected, that with us the *definite article* is of great use for discriminating the explicative sense from the determinative. In the first case it is rarely used, in the second, it ought never to be omitted, unless when something still more definitive, such as a demonstrative pronoun, supplies its place. *(Art. 57. Illus.)*

Example. "I know that *all words* which are signs of complex ideas, furnish matter of mistake and cavil."*

Analysis. As *words*, the antecedent, has neither the article nor a demonstrative pronoun to connect it with the subsequent relative, it should seem that the clause, "which are signs of complex ideas," was merely explicative, and that the subject *words* was to be understood in the utmost latitude. This could not be the noble writer's sense, as it would be absurd to affirm of all words, that they are signs of complex ideas.

Correction. "I know that all *the* words which are signs of complex ideas;" or, "I know that all *those* words which are signs." Either of these ways makes the clause beginning with the relative serve to limit the import of the antecedent.

197. In numberless instances we find the pronouns *his* and *he* used, in like manner, *ambiguously;* and the latter especially when two or more males happen to be mentioned in the same clause of a sentence.

Obs. In such a case, we ought always either to give another turn to the expression, or to use the noun itself, and not the pronoun; for when the repetition of the word is necessary, it is not offensive. *(Illus. 3. p. 111. and Art. 152.)*

* Bolingbroke's Dissertation on Parties, Lect. 12.

198. There is in *adjectives* especially, a great risk of *ambiguity*, when they are not joined to the substantives to which they belong. (*Illus.* 5. *p.* 111.)

Illus. 1. This hazard arises, in our language, from our adjectives having no declension, by which case, number, and gender are distinguished. Their relation, therefore, is not otherwise to be ascertained than by their place. (*Illus.* § *II. p.* 64.)

Example. "God heapeth favours on his servants ever liberal and faithful."

Analysis. Is it God or his servants that are ever liberal and faithful? If the former, then the sentence should run thus; "God, ever liberal and faithful, heapeth favours on his servants." If the latter, then "God heapeth favours on his ever liberal and faithful servants," or "his servants who are ever liberal and faithful."

Illus. 2. Two or more adjectives are sometimes made to refer to the same substantive, when, in fact, they do not belong to the same thing, but to different things, which, being of the same kind, are expressed by the same generic name.

Example. "Both the ecclesiastic, and the secular powers concurred in those measures."

Analysis. Here the two adjectives, ecclesiastic and secular, relate to the same substantive *powers*, but do not relate to the same individual things; for the powers denominated ecclesiastic are totally different from those denominated secular. This too common idiom may be avoided either by repeating the substantive, or by subjoining the substantive to the first adjective, and prefixing the article to the second as well as the first.

Correction. "Both the ecclesiastic powers, and the secular concurred in those measures," or, "Both the ecclesiastic powers, and the secular powers;" but the former is perhaps preferable.

199. The construction of *substantive nouns* is sometimes *ambiguous.* (*Illus.* 4. *p.* 111.)

Example 1. "You shall seldom find a dull fellow of good education, but (if he happen to have any leisure upon his hands) will turn his head to one of those two amusements for all fools of eminence, *politics* or poetry."*

Analysis. The position of the words *politics* or *poetry* makes one at first imagine, that along with the terms *eminence*, they are affected by the preposition *of*, and construed with *fools*. The repetition of the *to* after eminence would have totally removed the ambiguity.

Example 2. "A rising tomb the lofty column bore."†

Analysis. Did the tomb bear the column, or the column the tomb? But this fault is frequent, in the construction of substantives, especially in verse, when both what we call the nominative case and the accusative are put before the verb. As in nouns those cases are not distinguished either by inflection, or prepositions, so neither can they be distinguished in such instances by arrangement.

200. *Ambiguity in using the conjunctions.*

Example. "At least my own private letters leave room for a politi-

* Spectator, No. 43. † Pope's Odyssey, Book 12.

tian, well versed in matters of this nature, to suspect *as much*, *as* a penetrating friend of mine tells me."

Analysis. The particle *as*, which in this sentence immediately precedes the words *a penetrating friend*, makes frequently a part of these compound conjunctions *as much as*, *as well as*, *as far as*. It will, therefore, naturally appear, at first, to belong to the words *as much*, which immediately precede it. But as this is not really the case, it ought to have been otherwise situated; for it is not enough that it is separated by a comma, these small distinctions in the pointing being but too frequently overlooked.

Correction. "At least my own private letters, as a penetrating friend of mine tells me, leave room for a politician well versed in matters of this nature to suspect as much."

201. Sometimes a *particular clause* or *expression* is so situated, that it may be construed with *different members* of the same sentence, and thus exhibit *different meanings*. (*Illus* 8. *p.* 112. *and Art.* 151.)

Example. "It has not a word but what the author religiously thinks *in it*."*

Analysis. One would at first imagine the author's meaning to be, that it had not a word which the author did not think to be in it. Alter a little the place of the last two words, and supply the ellipsis, and the ambiguity will be removed.

Correction. "It has not a word *in it*, but what the author religiously thinks it should contain."

202. *The squinting construction*,† another fertile source of ambiguity, is, when a clause is so situated in a sentence, that one is at first at a loss to know whether it ought to be connected with the words which go before, or with those which come after.

Example. "As it is necessary to have the head clear, as well as the complexion, to be perfect in this part of learning, I rarely mingle with the men, but frequent the tea tables of the ladies."‡

Analysis. Whether, "to be perfect in this part of learning, is it necessary to have the head clear as well as the complexion;" or, "to be perfect in this part of learning, does he rarely mingle with the men, but frequent the tea tables of the ladies?" Which ever of these be sense, the words ought to have been otherwise arranged.

* Guardian, No. 4. † *Construction louche*, it is called by the French.
‡ Guardian, No. 10.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE UNINTELLIGIBLE.

203. UNDER the article *precision*, Chapter IV. of Book II., but more particularly in *Illus.* 6. *Art.* 181, it was observed generally, that a speaker may express himself obscurely, and so convey his meaning imperfectly to the mind of the hearer. In Chapter VI. of *this* book, it was shewn, that he may express himself ambiguously, and so along with his own, convey a meaning entirely different. In this Chapter, we shall shew that he may even express himself *unintelligibly*, and so convey no meaning at all. This fault arises,

1st. From great confusion of thought, accompanied with intricacy of expression: (*Art.* 121. *Illus.*)

2dly. From affectation of excellence in the diction:

3dly. From a total want of meaning.

First. The unintelligible from confusion of thought.

204. Language is the medium through which the sentiments of the writer are perceived by the reader. (*Art.* 181.) And though the impurity, or the grossness of the medium, will render the image obscure or indistinct, yet no purity in the medium will suffice for exhibiting a distinct and unvarying image of a confused and unsteady object.*

Illus. There is a sort of half-formed thoughts, which we sometimes find a writer impatient to give the world, before he himself is fully possessed of them. Now, if the writer himself perceive confusedly and imperfectly the sentiments which he would communicate, it is a thousand to one, the reader will not perceive them at all.

Example 1. *In simple sentences.* Sir Richard Steele, though a man of sense and genius, was a great master in this style; speaking of some of the coffee-house politicians, "I have observed," says he, "that the superiority among these, proceeds from an opinion of gallantry and fashion."†

Analysis. This sentence, considered in itself, evidently conveys no meaning. First, it is not said, whose opinion, their own, or that of others; secondly, it is not said what opinion, or of what sort, favourable or unfavourable, true or false, but in general an opinion of *gallantry* and *fashion*, which contains no definite expression of any mean-

* The distinctions in some departments of this Grammar of Rhetoric, are so nice, that they differ not in kind, but in degree, from one another: yet, if the intermediate steps, by which we have passed from one to the other, be removed, we shall at once perceive how necessary they were to a full development of the art. Without attending to this remark, they who have but superficially glanced at this chapter, would be ready to consider it a repetition of the article precision, yet is it totally distinct, as very little sagacity may soon discover.

† Spectator, No. 49.

ing. With the joint assistance of the context, reflection and conjecture, we shall perhaps conclude that the author intended to say, that the rank among these politicians, was determined by the opinion generally entertained of the rank in point of gallantry and fashion that each of them had attained.

Example 2. Of a *complex* sentence, which conveys indeed the dullest species of the unintelligible. "The serene aspect of these writers, joined with the great encouragement I observe is given to another, or, what is indeed to be suspected, in which he indulges himself, confirmed me in the notion I have of the prevalence of ambition this way."*

Analysis. Was it the serene aspect of these writers that confirmed him in the notion he had of the prevalence of ambition? And if so, was the prevalence of this ambition a prevalence to obtain, or to preserve, a "serene aspect? or to become writers?" Again, was great encouragement given to another man to assume a serene aspect, if he had none, or to preserve it if he had such a thing? Joined to the great encouragement given to another, to do what? "In which he indulges himself." In what? this encouragement, or a serene aspect? In short, the writer talks downright nonsense, for the sentence admits not of decomposition.

205. *Secondly. The unintelligible from affectation of excellence.* In this there is always something figurative; but the figures are remote, and things heterogeneous are combined.

Example 1. In a *simple* sentence. The Guardian, speaking of meekness and humility, says, "This temper of soul, keeps our understanding *tight about us.*"†

Analysis. This is an incongruous metaphor. The understanding is made a girdle to our other mental faculties; for the fastening of which girdle, meekness and humility serve as a buckle.

Example 2. Yet when that flood in its own depths was drown'd,
It left behind it false and slippery ground.‡

Analysis. The first of these lines is marvellously nonsensical. It informs us of a prodigy never heard of before, a drowned flood; nay, which is still more extraordinary, a flood that was so excessively deep, that after leaving nothing else to drown, it turned *felo-de-se*, and drowned itself. And doubtless, if a flood can be in danger of drowning itself, the deeper it is, the danger must be the greater. So far, at least, the author talks consequentially. The first line itself has no meaning; but the author intended to say, "When the waters of the deluge had subsided."

Example 3. In a *complex* sentence. "If the savour of things lies cross to honesty, if the fancy be florid, and the appetite high towards the subaltern beauties and lower order of worldly symmetries and proportions, the conduct will infallibly turn this latter way."§

Analysis. Here we have lofty images and high sounding words, but where shall we find the sense? The meaning, where there is a meaning, cannot be said to be communicated and adorned by the words, but is rather buried under them. The French critics call this species

* Guardian, No. 1. † Ibid. ‡ Dryden's Panegyric on the Coronation of Charles II. § Characteristics, Vol. III. Misc. II. ch. 2.

of writing, or of figure, *galimatias;* the English call it *bombast;* and we may properly define it *the sublime of nonsense.*

Example 4. "But what can one do? or how dispense with these darker disquisitions, and moon-light voyagers, when we have to deal with a sort of moon-blind wits, who, though very acute and able in their kind, may be said to renounce day-light, and extinguish, in a manner, the bright visible world, by allowing us to know nothing beside what we can prove, by strict and formal demonstration."*

Analysis. It must be owned, that the condition of those wits is truly deplorable; for though very acute and able in their kind, yet being moon-light blind, they cannot see by night; and having renounced day-light, they will not see by day; so that, for any use they have of their eyes, they are no better than stone blind. It is astonishing too, that the reason for rendering a moon-light voyage indispensable, is, that we have moon-blind persons only for our company, the very reason which, to our ordinary understanding, would render such a voyage improper.

O! quanta species, inquit, ast cerebrum non habet.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VARIOUS SPECIES OF THE UNINTELLIGIBLE.

206. THE UNINTELLIGIBLE, *from want of meaning in the writer,* proceeds from vacuity of thought. Here the sentence is generally simple in its structure, and the construction easy.

Illus. Let us contrast this with the unintelligible proceeding from confusion of thought, accompanied with intricacy of expression. In this last, you hesitate at certain intervals, and retrace your progress; finding yourself at a loss in the terms, and at a loss for the meaning, you then try to construe the sentence, and to ascertain the signification of the words. By these means, and by the help of the context, you will possibly come at last at what the author would have said. In the unintelligible, from *want of meaning*, provided words, glaringly unsuitable, are not combined, you proceed without hesitation or doubt. You never suspect, that you do not understand a sentence, the terms of which are familiar to you, and of which you perceive distinctly the grammatical order. But if, by any means, you are induced to think more closely on the subject, and to peruse the words a second time more attentively; you will then begin to suspect them, and at length discover, that they contain nothing, but either an identical proposition, which conveys no knowledge, or a proposition of that kind, of which you cannot so much as affirm, that it is either true or false. Sometimes pompous metaphors, and sonorous phrases, are injudiciously employed to add dignity to the most trivial conceptions; sometimes they are made the vehicles for nonsense. In madmen there is as great a variety of character, as in those who enjoy the use of their reason. In like

* Characteristics, Vol. III. Misc. IV.

manner, it may be said of nonsense, that, in writing it, there is as great scope for variety of style, as there is in writing sense.

207. First, the PUERILE, which is always produced when an author runs on in a species of verbosity, amusing his reader with synonymous terms, and identical propositions, well turned periods, and high sounding words; but at the same time, using those words so indefinitely, that the reader can either affix no meaning to them at all, or he may almost affix any meaning that he pleases.

Example. "Whatever renders a period sweet and pleasant, makes it also graceful; a good ear is the gift of Nature, it may be much improved, but not acquired by art; whoever is possessed of it will scarcely need dry critical precepts to enable him to judge of a true rythmus, and melody of composition: just members, accurate proportions, a musical symphony, magnificent figures, and that *decorum*, which is the result of all these, *are* unison to the human mind; we are so framed by nature, that their charm is irresistable. Hence all ages and nations have been *smit* with the love of the Muses."*

Analysis. Through the whole paragraph, the author proceeds in the same careless and desultory manner, affording at times some glimmerings of sense, and perpetually ringing the changes in a few favourite words and phrases.

Example 2. From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony,
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in man.†

Analysis. This is of the same signature with the former; there is not even a glimpse of meaning through all the compass of the words; but in writings of this stamp, we must accept of sound, instead of sense, being assured, at least, that if we meet with little that can inform the judgment, we shall find nothing that will offend the ear.

208. The LEARNED *nonsense* is another species of the unintelligible: and scholastic theology is considered the most fruitful source of this species of nonsense, unless, perhaps, we include also antiquarian researches. The more incomprehensible the subject is, the greater scope has the declaimer to talk plausibly, without any meaning. Also the deeper any speculation be buried in the darkness of remote antiquity, the wider the field for most excellent matter of contemplative amazement.

Illus. To both these *styles* of the unintelligible, the lines of the bard, addressed to the patroness of sophistry, as well as dulness, are admirably adapted.

"Explain upon a thing till all men doubt it;
And write about it, goddess, and about it."‡

* Geddes on the composition of the Ancients, Sect. I.
† Dryden's Ode for St. Cecelia's day. ‡ Dunciad

Example. "Nothing is there *to come*, and nothing *past*,
But an eternal *now* does always last."*

Analysis. What an insatiable thirst hath this bastard philosophy for absurdity and contradiction! In these school metaphysics, a *now* that lasts; that is, an instant which continues during successive instants; an eternal now; an instant that is no instant, and an eternity that is no eternity, is a mere figment of human imagination, a rhapsody of the transcendent unintelligible.

209. The third species we shall denominate the *profound.* It is most commonly to be met with in political writings. No where else, in the present day, do we find the merest nothings set off with an air of solemnity, as the result of very deep thought and sage reflection. But let us hear a politician of the old school.

Example. 'Tis agreed, that in all governments, there is an absolute and unlimited power, which naturally and originally seems to be placed in the whole body, wherever the executive part of it lies. This holds of the body natural; for wherever we place the beginning of motion, whether from the head, or the heart, or the animal spirits in general, the body moves and acts by consent of all its parts.†

Analysis. The first sentence in this passage contains one of the most hackneyed maxims of the writers on politics; a maxim, however, of which it will be more difficult than is commonly imagined, to discover, not the justness, but the sense. The illustration from the material body, contained in the second sentence, is indeed more glaringly nonsensical. It is utterly inconceivable to affirm what it is that constitutes this consent of all the parts of the body, which must be obtained previously to every motion. Yet the whole paragraph from which this quotation is taken, has in it such a speciousness, that it is a question, if even a judicious reader will not, on the first perusal, be sensible of the defect.

210. The *marvellous* is the last species of nonsense that we shall exemplify. It is the characteristic of this kind, that it astonishes, and even confounds, by the boldness of the affirmations, which always appear flatly to contradict the plainest dictates of common sense, and thus to involve a manifest absurdity.

Example. "Nature in herself is unseemly, and he who copies her servilely, and without artifice, will always produce something poor, and of a mean taste. What is called load in colours and lights, can only proceed from a profound knowledge in the values of colours, and from an admirable industry, which makes the painted objects appear more true, if I may say so, than the real ones. In this sense, it may be asserted, that in Rubens' pieces, art is above nature, and nature only a copy of that great master's works."‡

* Cowley's Davideis, Book I.

† Swift's Discourse of the Contests and Dissentions in Athens and Rome.

‡ "La Nature est ingrate d'elle même et qui s'attacheroit a la copier simplement comme elle est, et sans artifice, feroit toujours quelque chose de pauvre et d'un très petit goût. Ce que vous nommez exagerations dans les couleurs, et dans les lumieres

Analysis. What a strange subversion, or inversion, if you will, of all the most obvious and hitherto undisputed truths! Not satisfied with affirming the unseemliness of every production of Nature, whom this philosopher has discovered to be an arrant bungler, and the immense superiority of human art, whose humble scholar dame Nature might be proud to be accounted, he rises to asseverations, which shock all our notions, and utterly defy the powers of apprehension. Painting is found to be the original; or rather Rubens' pictures are the original, and nature is the copy; and indeed very consequentially, the former is represented as the standard by which the beauty and perfections of the latter are to be estimated. Nor do the qualifying phrases, "If I may say so," and "in this sense it may be asserted," make here the smallest odds. For as this sublime critic has no where hinted what sense it is which he denominates "this sense," no reader will be able to conjecture, what the author *might have said*, and not absurdly said to the same effect. When the expression is stripped of the *absurd* meaning, (*Art.* 204.) there remains nothing but balderdash, an unmeaning jumble of words, which at first seem to announce some great discovery.

Example 2. Witness, as another specimen of the same kind, the famous prostration of an heroic lover, in one of Dryden's plays:

"My wound is great, because it is so small."

Analysis. The nonsense of this was properly exposed, by an extempore verse of the Duke of Buckingham, who, on hearing this line, exclaimed, in the house,

It would be greater, were it none at all.

Conclusion. Thus have we illustrated, as far as example can illustrate, some of the principal varieties to be remarked in unmeaning sentences or nonsense; the puerile, the learned, the profound, and the marvellous; together with those other classes of the unintelligible, arising either from confusion of thought, accompanied with intricacy of expression, or from an excessive aim at excellence in the style and manner.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE HARMONY OF PERIODS.

211. IN the HARMONY OF PERIODS, two things may be considered. First, agreeable sound, or modulation in general, without any particular expression: next, the sound so ordered, as to become expressive of the sense. The first is the more common; the second, the higher beauty.

est une admirable industrée que fait paroitre les objects peints plus véritables, s'il faut ainsi dire, que les véritables mêmes. C'est ainsi que les tableaux de Rubens sont plus beaux que la Nature, la quell. semble n'être que la opie des ouvrages de ce grand homme." Receuil de divers ouvrage sur la peinture et le coloris. Par M. de Pile. Paris, 1775. p. 225.

Obs. Agreeable sound, in general, is the property of a well constructed sentence. This beauty of musical construction in prose depends upon two things; the *choice of words*, and the *arrangement* of them.

212. Those words are most agreeable to the ear which are composed of smooth and liquid sounds, where there is a proper intermixture of vowels and consonants; without too many harsh consonants grating upon each other; or too many open vowels in succession, to cause a hiatus, or disagreeable aperture of the mouth. (*Illus. Art.* 13.)

Illus. It may always be assumed as a principle, that, whatever sounds are difficult in pronunciation, are, in the same proportion, harsh and painful to the ear. Vowels give softness; consonants, strength to the sounds of words. The music of language requires a just proportion of both; and it will be hurt, and rendered either grating or effeminate, by an excess of either. Long words are commonly more agreeable to the ear than monosyllables. They please it by the composition or succession of sounds, which they present to it; and, accordingly, the most musical languages abound most in polysyllables. Among words of any length, those are the most musical, which do not run wholly either upon long or short syllables, but are composed of an intermixture of them; such as, *repent, produce, velocity, celerity, independent, impetuosity.*

213. The harmony which results from a proper arrangement of the words and members of a period, is complex and of great nicety. For let the words themselves be ever so well chosen, let them sound ever so well, yet, if they be ill disposed, the music of the sentence is utterly lost. (*Scolium, p.* 86. *Art.* 138.)

Illus. 1. In the harmonious structure and disposition of periods, no writer whatever, ancient or modern, equals Cicero. He had studied this with care; and was fond, perhaps to excess, of what he calls the "plena ac numerosa oratio." We need only open his writings to find instances that will render the effect of musical language sensible to every ear.

2. As an instance of a musical sentence in our own language, we may take the following from Milton's Treatise on Education: "We shall conduct you to a hill-side, laborious, indeed, at the first ascent; but else, so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospects, and melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming."

Analysis. Every thing in this sentence conspires to promote the harmony. The words are happily chosen; full of liquids and soft sounds; *laborious, smooth, green, goodly, melodious, charming:* and these words so artfully arranged, that were we to alter the collocation of any one of them, we should, presently, be sensible of the melody's suffering. For, let us observe, how finely the members of the period swell one above another. "So smooth, so green,"—"so full of goodly prospects, and melodious sounds on every side;"—till the ear, prepared by this gradual rise, is conducted to that full close on which it rests with pleasure; —"that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming."

214. The structure of periods, then, being susceptible of of a very sensible melody, our next inquiry should be, how this melodious structure is formed, what are the principles of it, and by what laws is it regulated? (*Art.* 138. *Illus.*)

Obs. The ancient rhetoricians have entered into a very minute and particular detail of this subject; more particular, indeed, than into any other that regards language.

Illus. They hold, that to prose, as well as to verse, there belong certain numbers, less strict indeed, yet such as can be ascertained by rule. They go so far as to specify the feet, as they are called, that is, the succession of long and short syllables, which should enter into the different members of a sentence, and to shew what the effect of each of these will be. Wherever they treat of the structure of sentences, it is always the music of them that makes the principal object. Cicero and Quinctilian are full of this. The other qualities of precision, unity, and strength, which we consider as of great importance, they handle slightly; but when they come to the "*junctura et numerus*," the modulation and harmony, there they are copious. Dyonisius, of Halicarnassus, one of the most judicious critics of antiquity, wrote a treatise on the *Composition of Words in a Sentence*, which is altogether confined to their musical effect. He makes the excellency of a sentence to consist in four things; first, in the sweetness of single sounds; secondly, in the composition of sounds; that is, the numbers, or feet; thirdly, in change, or variety of sound; and, fourthly, in sound suited to the sense. On all these points, he writes with great accuracy and refinement, and is very worthy of being consulted.

2. The ancient languages of Greece and Rome, were much more susceptible, than our language is, of the graces and the powers of melody. The quantities of their syllables were more fixed and determined; their words were longer and more sonorous; their method of varying the terminations of nouns and verbs, both introduced a greater variety of liquid sounds, and freed them from that multiplicity of little auxiliary words which we are obliged to employ; and, what is of the greatest consequence, the inversions which their languages allowed, gave them the power of placing their words in whatever order was most suited to a musical arrangement. All these were great advantages, which they enjoyed above us, for harmony of period.

215. The doctrine of the Greek and Roman critics, on this head, has misled some to imagine, that it might be equally applied to our tongue; and that our prose writing might be regulated by spondees and trochees, and iambuses and pæons, and other metrical feet.

Obs. 1. But, first, our words cannot be measured, or, at least, can be measured very imperfectly by any feet of this kind. For, the quantity, the length and shortness of our syllables, is far from being so fixed and subjected to rule, as in the Greek and Roman tongues; but very often left arbitrary, and determined only by the emphasis and the sense.

2. Next, though our prose could admit of such a metrical regulation, yet from our plainer method of pronouncing every species of discourse, the effect would not be at all so sensible to the ear, nor be relished with so much pleasure, as among the Greeks and Romans.

3. And, lastly, this whole doctrine about the measures and numbers of prose, even as it has been delivered by the ancient rhetoricians themselves, is, in truth, in a great measure, loose and uncertain. It appears, indeed, that the melody of discourse was a matter of infinitely more attention to them, than ever it has been to the moderns. But though they write a great deal about it, they have never been able to reduce it to any rules which could be of real use in practice.

Illus. If we consult Cicero's *Orator*, where this point is discussed with the most minuteness, we shall see how much these ancient critics differed from one another, about the feet proper for the conclusion, and other parts of a sentence; and how much, after all, was left to the judgment of the ear. Nor, indeed, is it possible to give precise rules concerning this matter, in any language; as all prose composition must be allowed to run loose in its numbers; and, according as the tenor of a discourse varies, the modulation of sentences must vary infinitely.

216. But though this musical arrangement cannot be reduced into a system, every one who studies to write with grace, or to pronounce in public with success, will find himself obliged to attend to it not a little. But it is his ear, cultivated by attention and practice, that must chiefly direct him. For any rules that can be given on this subject, are very general. There are some rules, however, which may be of use to form the ear to the proper harmony of discourse.

217. There are two things on which the music of a sentence chiefly depends. These are, the proper distribution of the several members of the sentence; and, the close or cadence of the whole. *(Art.* 134.)

218. First, the *distribution* of the several members. It is of importance to observe, that, whatever is easy and agreeable to the organs of speech, always sounds grateful to the ear. While a period is going on, the termination of each of its members forms a pause, or rest, in pronouncing: and these rests should be so distributed, as to make the course of the breathing easy, and, at the same time, should fall at such distances, as to bear a certain musical proportion to each other. *(Art.* 144.)

Example 1. "This discourse concerning the easiness of God's commands, does, all along, suppose and acknowledge the difficulties of the first entrance upon a religious course; except only in those persons who have had the happiness to be trained up to religion by the easy and insensible degrees of a pious and virtuous education."*

Analysis. Here there is no harmony; nay, there is some degree of harshness and unpleasantness: owing principally to this, that there is, properly, no more than one pause or rest in the sentence, falling betwixt the two members into which it is divided; each of which is so long, as to occasion a considerable stretch of the breath in pronouncing it.

* Tillotson.

Example 2. Observe, now, on the other hand, the ease with which the following sentence, from Sir William Temple, glides along, and the graceful intervals at which the pauses are placed. He is speaking sarcastically of man: "But, God be thanked, his pride is greater than his ignorance, and what he wants in knowledge, he supplies by sufficiency. When he has looked about him, as far as he can, he concludes, there is no more to be seen; when he is at the end of his line, he is at the bottom of the ocean; when he has shot his best, he is sure none ever did, or even can, shoot better or beyond it. His own reason he holds to be the certain measure of truth; and his own knowledge, of what is possible in nature."*

Analysis. Here every thing is, at once, easy to the breath, and grateful to the ear; and, it is this sort of flowing measure, this regular and proportional division of the members of his sentences, which renders Sir William Temple's style always agreeable. We must observe, at the same time, that a sentence, with too many rests, and these placed at intervals too apparently measured and regular, is apt to savour of affecta tion.

219. The next thing to be attended to, is the close or *cadence* of the whole sentence, which, as it is always the part most sensible to the ear, demands the greatest care. "Let there be nothing harsh or abrupt in the conclusion of the sentence, on which the mind pauses and rests. This is the most material part in the structure of discourse. Here every hearer expects to be gratified; here his applause breaks forth."†

220. The only important rule that can be given here, is, that when we aim at dignity or elevation, the sound should be made to grow to the last; the longest members of the period, and the fullest and most sonorous words, should be reserved to the conclusion.

Example. "It fills the mind (i. e. sight) with the largest variety of ideas; converses with its objects at the greatest distance; and continues the longest in action, without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyments."‡

Analysis. Every reader must be sensible of a beauty here, both in the proper division of the members and pauses, and the manner in which the sentence is rounded, and conducted to a full and harmonious close. The sight fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas,

* Or this instance. He is addressing himself to Lady Essex, upon the death of her child: "I was once in hope, that what was so violent could not be long: but, when I observed your grief to grow stronger with age, and to increase, like a stream, the farther it ran; when I saw it draw out to such unhappy consequences, and to threaten no less than your child, your health and your life, I could no longer forbear this endeavour, nor end it without begging of you, for God's sake and for your own, for your children and your friends, your country and your family, that you would no longer abandon yourself to a disconsolate passion; but that you would, at length, awaken your piety, give way to your prudence, or, at least, rouse the invincible spirit of the Percy's, that never yet shrunk at any disaster."

† "Non igitur durum sit, neque abruptum, quo animi, velut, respirant ac reficiun' tur. Hæc est sedes orationis; hoc auditor expectat; hic laus omnis declamat. Quinctilian.

‡ Addison.

and it converses with them. To sentient natures, this is a pleasure; but it converses with them at the greatest distance, and must necessarily increase this pleasure. For what can be more agreeable than the commerce of communication with distant objects; but how is this agreeableness heightened, by its being kept long in action, and that too without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyment?

221. The same holds in melody, that was observed to take place with respect to significancy; that a falling off at the end is always injurious to the object which the speaker has in view. For this reason, particles, pronouns, and little words, are as ungracious to the ear, at the conclusion, as we formerly shewed they were inconsistent with strength of expression. (*Art.* 176, 177, 178, and 179.)

Obs. The sense and the sound have here a mutual influence on each other. That which hurts the ear, seems to mar the strength of the meaning; and that which really degrades the sense, in consequence of this primary effect, appears also to have a bad sound.

Example. How disagreeable is the following sentence of an author, speaking of the Trinity! "It is a mystery, which we firmly believe the truth of, and humbly adore the depth of." And how easily might it have been mended by this transposition! "It is a mystery, the truth of which we firmly believe, and the depth of which we humbly adore."

Corol. In general, it seems to hold, that a musical close, in our language, requires either the last syllable, or the last but one, to be a long syllable. Words which consist mostly of short syllables, as *contrary*, *particular*, *retrospect*, seldom conclude a sentence harmoniously, unless a train of long syllables, before, has rendered them agreeable to the ear.

222. Sentences, so constructed as to make the sound always swell and grow towards the end, and to rest either on a long or a penult long syllable, give a discourse the tone of declamation. The ear soon becomes acquainted with the melody, and is apt to be cloyed with it. If we would keep up the attention of the reader or hearer, if we would preserve vivacity and strength in our composition, we must be very attentive to vary our measures.

Illus. This regards the distribution of the members, as well as the cadence of the period. Sentences constructed in a similar manner, with the pauses falling at equal intervals, should never follow one another. Short sentences should be intermixed with long and swelling ones, to render discourse sprightly as well as magnificent. Even discords properly introduced, abrupt sounds, departures from regular cadence, have sometimes a good effect. Monotony is the great fault into which writers are apt to fall, who are fond of harmonious arrangement: and to have only one tune or measure, is not much better than having none at all. A very vulgar ear will enable a writer to catch some one melody, and to form the run of his sentences according to it. This soon proves disgusting. But a just and correct ear is

requisite for varying and diversifying the melody, and hence we seldom meet with authors, who are remarkably happy in this respect.

223. Though attention to the music of sentences must not be neglected, yet it must also be kept within proper bounds: for all appearances of an author's affecting harmony, are disagreeable; especially when the love of it betrays him so far, as to sacrifice, in any instance, perspicuity, precision, or strength in sentiment, to sound. (*Example* 1. *Art.* 206.)

Illus. 1. All unmeaning words, introduced merely to round the period, or fill up the melody, are great blemishes in writing. They are childish and puerile ornaments, by which a sentence always loses more in point of weight, than it can gain by such additions to the beauty of its sound.

2. Sense has its own harmony, as well as sound; and, where the sense of a period is expressed with clearness, force, and dignity, the words will almost always strike the ear agreeably; at least, a very moderate attention is all that is requisite for making the cadence of such a period pleasing: and the effect of greater attention is often no other, than to render composition languid and enervated.

3. After all the labour which Quinctilian bestows on regulating the measures of prose, he comes at last, with his usual good sense, to this conclusion: "Upon the whole, I would rather choose that composition should appear rough and harsh, if that be necessary, than that it should be enervated and effeminate, such as we find the style of too many. Some sentences, therefore, which we have studiously formed into melody, should be thrown loose, that they may not seem too much laboured; nor ought we ever to omit any proper or expressive word, for the sake of smoothing a period."*

4. Cicero, as we have elsewhere observed, is one of the most remarkable patterns of a harmonious style. His love of it, however, is too visible; and the pomp of his numbers sometimes detracts from his strength.

5. That noted close of his, *esse videatur*, which, in the oration Pro Lege Manilia, occurs eleven times, exposed him to censure among his contemporaries. We must observe, however, in defence of this great orator, that, in his style, there is a remarkable union of harmony with ease, which is always a great beauty; and if his harmony were studied, that study appears to have cost him but little trouble.

6. Among our English classics, not many are distinguished for musical arrangement. Milton, in some of his prose works, has very finely turned periods; but the writers of his age indulged a liberty of inversion, which would now be reckoned contrary to purity of style: and though this allowed their sentences to be more stately and sonorous, yet it gave them too much of a Latinised construction and order.

7. Of English writers, Lord Shaftesbury is, upon the whole, the most correct in his numbers. As his ear was delicate, he has attended to music in all his sentences; and he is peculiarly happy in this

* "In universum, si sit necesse, duram potiùs atque asperam compositionem malim esse, quam effeminatam ac enervem, qualis apud multos. Ideòque, vincta quædam de industria sunt solvenda, ne laborata videantur; neque ullum idoneum aut aptum verbum prætermittamus, gratiâ lenitatis." Lib. ix. c. 4.

respect, that he has avoided the monotony into which writers, who study the grace of sound, are very apt to fall, and has diversified his periods with great variety.

8. Addison has also much harmony in his style; more easy and smooth, but less varied than Lord Shaftesbury. Sir William Temple is, in general, very flowing and agreeable. Archbishop Tillotson is often careless and languid; and is much outdone by Bishop Atterbury in the music of his periods. Dean Swift despised musical arrangement altogether. Burke excels in harmonious periods. Johnson's style is generally pompous, sometimes lofty, and always Latinised.

Corol. Hitherto we have considered agreeable sound, or modulation, in general. It yet remains to treat of a higher beauty of this kind; the sound adapted to the sense. The former was no more than a simple accompaniment, to please the ear; the latter supposes the peculiar expression given to the music. We may remark two degrees of it: first, the current of sound, adapted to the tenour of a discourse: next, a particular resemblance effected between some object, and the sounds that are employed in describing it.

224. First, the current of sound may be adapted to the tenour of a discourse. Sounds have, in many respects, a correspondence with our ideas; partly natural, partly the effect of artificial associations. Hence it happens, that any one modulation of sound continued, imprints on our style a certain character and expression.

Illus. Sentences constructed with the Johnsonian fulness and swell, produce the impression of what is important, magnificent, sedate; for this is the natural tone which such a course of sentiment assumes.—But they suit no violent passion, no eager reasoning, no familiar address. These always require measures brisker, easier, and often more abrupt. And, therefore, to swell, or to let down the periods, as the subject demands, is a very important rule in oratory. No one tenour whatever, supposing it to produce no bad effect from satiety, will answer to all different compositions; nor even to all the parts of the same composition. It were as absurd to write a panegyric, and an invective, in a style of the same cadence, as to set the words of a nder love-song to the air of a warlike march.

Corol. What is requisite, therefore, is, that we previously fix, in our mind, a just idea of the general tone of sound which suits our subject; that is, which the sentiments we are to express, most naturally assume, and in which they most commonly vent themselves; whether round and smooth, or stately and solemn, or brisk and quick, or interrupted and abrupt.

225. But, besides the general correspondence of the current of sound with the current of thought, there may be a more particular expression attempted, of certain objects, by means of resembling sounds. This can be sometimes accomplished in prose composition; but there only in a more faint degree; nor is it there so much expected. In poetry, chiefly, it is looked for; when attention to sound is more demanded, and where the inversions and liberties of poetical style give us a greater command of euphony.

CHAPTER X.

RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN SOUND AND SENSE—INVERSION.

226. THE *sounds* of words may be employed for *representing*, chiefly, three classes of objects; first, *other sounds*; secondly, *motion*; and, thirdly, the *emotions* and *passions of our mind.*

Illus. Though two motions have no connection, yet in many particulars they may be said to have a resemblance. The motions of a vortex and a whirlwind are perfectly similar. All mankind have felt the analogy between dancing and music. All quick, or slow, or difficult motions, though performed in different circumstances, and by different agents, may in loose phraseology be said to resemble one another. Spoken language is a collection of successive and significant sounds, uttered by the speaker; composition is a certain series of those sounds, indicated by a particular sign to each, (*Art.* 37.) which can be run over by the reader; and it is obvious, that the motion of the voice of the speaker or the reader may resemble most other motions, at least in the general properties of quickness, slowness, ease, or difficulty. This is the foundation of the resemblance that takes place between the sound and the sense, in the construction of language.

227. Words or sentences consisting chiefly of short syllables, and of course pronounced with rapidity, bear an analogy to quick motion, and may fairly be said to form a resemblance of it; as, *impetuosity, precipitation.*

Example Virgil describes a horse at full gallop, in the following picturesque line.

"Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum."

Example 2. The same author paints the rapid flight of a pigeon hastening to her nest.

"Radit iter liquidum celeres neque commovet alas."

228. The English heroic verse affords not a proper picture of quick motion. It is limited to ten syllables, while the hexameter may extend from thirteen to seventeen. The hexameter acquires this advantage by the admission of five feet of dactyles, which throw into the line a large proportion of short syllables; and the preceding lines of Virgil are pertinent examples. The English heroic verse cannot augment the number of its syllables, and preserve its measure. The only resource left to our poets in this case is, to employ an Alexandrine line, consisting of twelve syllables.

Illus. Pope has frequently adopted this expedient, but with little success; for of all the poetical lines we have, the Alexandrine is perhaps the slowest, as it consists generally of monosyllables, which, to be

understood, must be slowly pronounced. This was Pope's own opinion; for, he observes, in his Essay on Criticism, that

"A needless Alexandrine ends the song,
And like a wounded snake drags its slow length along.

Example. But Pope, notwithstanding, makes use of this verse to describe quick motion.

"Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main."

Analysis. It is probable, that this great poet sacrificed, on this and some other similar occasions, a portion of his own taste to gratify the public ear. He was conscious the verse was faulty, but perhaps concluded, that many of his readers would take for a beauty, what was really a blemish; that those who could discern the error, would discern also the proper apology for it; or would allow him, when he could not imitate a quick motion, to approach it as near as possible, by substituting in its place the continuance of a slow one.

229. A word consisting of long syllables, or a sentence of monosyllables, may resemble solemn, harsh, or difficult motion, as, *forewarn, mankind.*

Example 1. Thus Pope, in his Essay on Criticism,

"But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar."

Example 2. Again,

"With many a weary step, and many a groan,
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone."

Analysis. The last line possesses uncommon beauty; for, besides that the words are all monosyllables, which renders a pause necessary after each of them in the pronunciation, the artful repetition of the aspiration paints very forcibly the loss of breath under which Sisyphus might be supposed to labour from the violent exertion of his force. This circumstance is not in the original, which also possesses extraordinary merit. Homer fixes his attention on the muscular exertions, and the motions of Sisyphus. He has, however, the advantage of his translator, by the superiority his language gives him, in contrasting the slow and difficult motion upwards, with the rapid and furious motion downwards.*

230. Pope employs again the Alexandrine to describe the motion downward.

Example. "The huge round stone resulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground."

231. Easy or smooth motion may be painted by a succession of soft and harmonious sounds.

* The lines in the original run thus:

"Και μην Σίσυφον εἰσεῖδον κρατέρ' ἄλγε' ἔχοντα
Λᾶαν βασάζοντα πελώριον ἀμφοτέρηιν
Ητοι ὁ μεν μάλα σκηπτόμενος χερσίν τε πόσιν τε
Λᾶαν ανω ὤθεσκε ποτι λόφον, αλ' ὁτε μέλλοι
Ακρον ὑπερβαλλέειν, τοτ' αποσρέψασκε κραταιις
Ἄυτις επειτα πέδονδε κυλίνδετο λᾶας ἀναιδής."

Example. "Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows."
Pope's Essay on Criticism.

232. Virgil, describing the gay and easy motion of the nymph Ægle, says,

Example. "Addit se sociam, timidisque supervenit Ægle." *Ecloga VI. Silenus.*

233. Pope has been very successful in contrasting the two kinds of motion last mentioned. In the first four lines of the following quotation, he ridicules the affected pomp and harshness of the versification of Sir Richard Blackmore. In the last four lines, he opposes to his solemnity and harshness the inanimate but smooth composition of the writers of panegyrics.

"What, like Sir Richard, rumbling, rough and fierce,
With arms, and George, and Brunswick, crowd my verse;
Rend with tremendous sounds your ears asunder.
With gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbuss, and thunder?
Then all your muses softer arts display:
Let Carolina smooth the tuneful lay;
Lull with Amelia's liquid name the nine,
And sweetly flow o'er all the royal line."

234. Violent or slow motions may be imitated by abrupt and heavy, or harsh words and lines, as *horrid, harrow, hoarse.*

Example. Again, Pope:

"Loud sounds the air, redoubling strokes on strokes,
On all sides round the forest hurls her oaks
Headlong. Deep echoing groan the thickets brown,
Then rustling, crackling, crashing, thunder down."

"First march the heavy mules securely slow,
O'er hills, o'er dales, o'er crags, o'er rocks they go" *Iliad XXIII.* 138.

"When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words move slow." *Essay on Criticism,* 370.

235. Virgil, describing the efforts of the Cyclops in forming the thunder, thus sings:

"Illi inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt." *(Geor.* 4.)

236. Words may be so modulated, that their sound shall be expressive of the dispositions and emotions of the mind. Accordingly, a verse or line, composed mostly of monosyllables, or of long syllables, and of course slowly pronounced, prompts the notion of dignity and solemnity. Pope thus describes Nestor:

"Slow from his seat arose the Pylian sage."
"Next Comus, reverend sire, went footing slow." *Milton.*
"Oli sedato respondit corde Latinus." *Æneid.*
"Incedit tardo molomime subsidendo." *Ibid*

237. Harsh and disagreeable sounds suggest the same emotions, which arise from beholding any exertion performed imperfectly, or with difficulty:

—"When they list, their lean and flashy songs
Harsh grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw." *Milton's Lycidas.*

238. Virgil, with much modesty, thus characterises his own poetry in his Eclogues.

"Nam neque adhuc Varo videor, nec dicere Cinna
Digna, sed argutos inter strepere anser olores."

239. The frequent repetition of the letter *r* in the last verse is very descriptive of the rudeness and harshness of bad verses. Thus, Pope:

"Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains from hard-bound brains eight lines a year." *Letter to Arbuthnot.*

240. Smooth and easy verses generate an emotion allied to joy and vivacity. It is difficult to decide whether the sentiment, or the versification of the following example is more sprightly.

"Bright as the sun her eyes the gazers strike;
And like the sun they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide.
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget them all." *Rape of the Lock.*

241. The slow and solemn sound of the subsequent verses prompts an emotion similar to melancholy.

"In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly pensive contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing melancholy reigns." *Eloisa to Abelard.*

242. INVERSION is a branch of ornament, and of that species of it which belongs both to the sound and the sense. It belongs to the sound, because by transposing the natural and grammatical order of the words, arrangements may be formed more agreeable to the ear than could otherwise be obtained. It is connected with the sense, because by suspending the appearance of some capital word or circumstance, curiosity may be excited, and artfully prolonged, till the conclusion of the period discloses the mystery, and impresses the sense deeper on the mind.

Illus. 1. The object of inversion, then, is to attain some beauty or impulse that cannot be obtained by preserving the natural order. This attainment is the same with that of grammatical perspicuity: and hence arises an invariable principle, to limit the extent of inversion; namely, it must seek no embellishment which would be bought too dear; it must admit no modulation which may produce obscurity.

2. Different kinds of composition, and different languages, admit different degrees of inversion. All discourse addressed to the understanding, seldom permits much inversion. More of it is allowed in works addressed to the imagination, and most of all in those productions which are intended to rouse and interest the passions and emotions of the heart. The cool and philosophical construction of modern languages, also, renders them much less susceptible of inversion than the ancient. *(Art.* 24—30. *and* 171.*)*

243. There are several words, however, in all languages, which cannot easily be separated from one another, and which cannot therefore admit much inversion.

Illus. 1. One substantive depending on another is seldom, in prose at least, in any language, disjoined from it. "The beauty of virtue," "via virtutis," "ὁδος αρετης." But in the poetry of Greece and Rome, such words are frequently separated.

"Arma virumque cano Trojæ qui primus ab oris."

"Μῆνιν αειδε θέα πηληϊάδεω Αχιλῆος."* *Ilias. l.* 1.

2. A preposition is seldom disjoined from its substantive. *From* east *to* west; *ανα ϛρατον*; *ex* sententia. (*Art.* 71.)

3. An adjective is almost always associated with its substantive in the modern languages, and very frequently in the ancient. (*Art.* 59. *and Illus.* 143.)

4. An adverb is generally adjoined to its verb or adjective both in ancient and modern languages, because, having no inflection, juxta-position only can denote its relation. (*Art.* 145.)

Corol. These observations circumscribe the subject of inquiry within certain limits, and discriminate the parts of speech, in the disposition of which we have most reason to expect inversion. It appears, then, that they are the principal parts of sentences, the agent and the action, or the nominative and the verb. (*Art.* 144. *and* 134.)

5. In the languages of Greece and Rome, it seems perfectly arbitrary in what part of the sentence the nominative is placed. We find it in the beginning of the sentence, or separated by half, sometimes by the whole sentence, from the verb it governs. (*Art.* 143. *Illus.* 2. *Art.* 23.)

6. The verb undergoes the same variety of positions. It stands in the beginning, sometimes in the middle, but most frequently in the end of the sentence.

Obs. Of all these positions examples are so numerous, that we shall not produce any. The variety of terminations which inflection furnishes to the ancient languages is sufficient, in all these circumstances, to distinguish the relations of the agent and the action, and to preserve perspicuity.

244. The inversions of modern languages are much less frequent and violent, and the following are the most common of which our language is susceptible.

245. A circumstance is sometimes situated before the nominative.

Example. "In order," says Addison, "to set this matter in a clear light to every reader, I shall, in the first place, observe, that a metaphor is a simile in one word." This arrangement is more agreeable, and perhaps more perspicuous, than the natural one. "I shall, in the first place, observe, in order to set this matter in a clear light to every reader, that a metaphor is a simile in one word."

246. Sometimes a circumstance is inserted after the

* See Example 1. Art. 249.

nominative, and before or between the auxiliary and the verb. *(Illus. 7. and 8. p. 89.)*

Example. "I have formerly, with a good deal of attention, considered the subject upon which you command me to communicate my thoughts." This is, perhaps, not inferior to the natural order. "I have formerly considered, with a good deal of attention, the subject on which you command me to communicate my thoughts."

247. The nominative is placed after the verb. But this inversion is restricted almost entirely to poetry, where it has often a pleasing effect; witness the following examples from the fourth Book of Paradise Lost.

"Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower
Glist'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
After soft showers, and sweet the coming on
Of grateful evening mild."

248. The placing of the nominative after the verb is one of the most easy inversions of which our language is susceptible; and, as it affords an agreeable variety, and is perfectly consistent with perspicuity, it should not be permitted to fall into disuse. It was formerly frequent in prose, and still appears in that species of composition with dignity and grace.

Example 1. "There exists not in nature a more miserable animal, than a bad man at war with himself."

2. "In splendid robes appeared the queen."

3. The following quotations are found in Hume's History of England. Speaking of Charles I. "He had formed one of the most illustrious characters of his age, had not the extreme narrowness of his genius in every thing but war sullied the lustre of his other talents." "Had the limitations on the prerogative been in his time quite fixed, his integrity had made him regard as sacred the boundaries of the constitution."

249. Another very frequent inversion, in poetry, stations the subject in the beginning of a sentence, and sometimes throws in a circumstance between the subject and its verb.

Example 1. The first verses in the Iliad are thus translated by Pope:

"Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumber'd, heavenly Goddess, sing."

Example 2. Paradise Lost opens in a similar manner:

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly muse!"

Example 3. Thomson's Autumn commences in the following strain:

"Crown'd with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on. the Doric reed once more
Well-pleas'd I tune."

Illus. This inversion, though proper and beautiful in poetry, appears scarcely tolerable in prose. (See Art. 171. in the example, from Gordon's Translation of Tacitus.)

250. A noun preceded by a preposition very frequently appears before a verb.

Example. "By these we acquired our liberties," said the Scotch nobles, laying their hands on their swords, "and with these will we defend them."*

Analysis. This order is much preferable in point of emphasis to the natural one. How tame is the natural order! "We acquired our liberties by these, and we will defend them with these." (*See Art.* 124. *Illus.* 20. *p.* 80.)

Schol. 1. These inversions deviate little from the order of ideas, or the grammatical order of the words; and, though they suspend the meaning, they hurt not the perspicuity. This analogy between the succession of ideas, and the arrangement of words, is one of the principal beauties of modern languages, which the ancients relinquish in order to attain other beauties in point of melody; and it is perhaps impossible to propose any general principle by which the preference of these beauties may be decided. (*Obs. Art.* 27.)

2. The ancients would complain, perhaps, of the tameness and simplicity of our arrangement, while we might reprehend the artifice and obscurity of their inversion. They would reprobate our neglect of harmony, while we might expose their apparent attachment to sound more than to sense. Such, at least, is the power of habit, that a period of Latin or Greek, arranged in grammatical order, would excite disgust, and a period of English in the order of Greek or Latin would appear ridiculous or unintelligible.†

* Robertson's History of Scotland.

† In conjunction with these articles on *Inversion*, the student should peruse Chapter IV. Book I.

BOOK IV.

OF FIGURES.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CHARACTER AND ADVANTAGES OF FIGURES.

251. FIGURES, in general, may be described to be that language, which is prompted either by the imagination, or by the passions. *(Chap. III. B. I.)*

252. Rhetoricians commonly divide them into two great classes; *Figures of words*, and *figures of thought*.

253. *Figures of words*, are commonly called TROPES. A trope consists in a word's being employed to signify something that is different from its original and primitive meaning; so that if you alter the word, you destroy the figure.

Illus. Thus, in the sentences; "Light ariseth to the upright in darkness;" the *trope* consists in "light and darkness," being *not meant* literally, but substituted for *comfort* and *adversity*, on account of some resemblance or analogy which light and darkness are supposed to bear to these conditions of life. *(See Illus. 2. Art. 19.)*

254. *Figures of thought*, suppose the words to be used in their proper and literal meaning, and the figure to consist in the turn of the thought. They appear in *exclamations*, *interrogations*, *apostrophes*, and *comparisons*; where, though you vary the words that are used, or translate them from one language into another, you may, nevertheless, still preserve the same figure in the thought. *(Illus. 3. Art. 19.)*

Obs. This distinction, however, is of no great use; as nothing can be built upon it in practice: neither is it always very clear. It is of little importance, whether we give to some particular mode of expression the name of a *trope*, or of a *figure*; provided we remember, that figurative language always imports some colouring of the imagination, or some emotion of passion, expressed in our style: and, perhaps, *figures of imagination*, and *figures of passion*, might be a more useful distribution of the subject. But, without insisting on any artificial divisions, it will be more useful, that we inquire into the advantages which language derives from *figures of speech*.

255. First, TROPES, OR FIGURES, *enrich language*, and render it *more copious.* By their means, words and phrases are multiplied for expressing all sorts of ideas; for describing even the minutest differences; the nicest shades and colours of thought; which no language could possibly do by proper words alone, without assistance from tropes. (*Art.* 21.)

256. Secondly, they *bestow dignity upon style.* The familiarity of common words, to which our ears are much accustomed, tends to degrade style. When we want to adapt our language to the tone of an elevated subject, we should be greatly at a loss, if we could not borrow assistance from figures; which, properly employed, have a similar effect on language, with what is produced by the rich and splendid dress of a person of rank; to create respect, and to give an air of magnificence to him who wears it. Assistance of this kind is often needed in prose compositions; but poetry could not subsist without it. Hence, figures form the constant language of poetry. (*Art.* 21.)

Illus. 1. To say, that "the sun rises," is trite and common; but it becomes a magnificent image when expressed as Thompson has done:

> But yonder comes the powerful king of day,
> Rejoicing in the east.——

2. To say, that "All men are subject alike to death," presents only a vulgar idea; but it rises and fills the imagination when painted thus by Horace:

> Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede, pauperum tabernas
> Regumque turres.*

Or,

> Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium,
> Versatur urna, serius, ocyus,
> Sors exitura, et nos in æternum
> Exilium impositura cymbæ.†

257. In the third place, FIGURES *give us the pleasure of enjoying two objects presented together without confusion, to our view;* the principal idea, that is the subject of the discourse, along with its accessory, which gives it the figurative dress. We see one thing in another, as Aristotle expresses it; which is always agreeable to the mind. For ther is nothing with which the fancy is more delighted, than with comparisons and resemblances of objects; and all

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* With equal pace impartial fate
Knocks at the palace, as the cottage gate.

† We all must tread the paths of fate;
And ever shakes the mortal urn,
Whose lot embarks us, soon or late,
On Charon's boat; ah! never to return. *Francis.*

tropes are founded upon some relation or analogy between one thing and another.

Illus. When, for instance, in place of "youth," we say, the "morning of life;" the fancy is immediately entertained with all the resembling circumstances which presently occur between these two objects. At one moment, we have before us a certain period of human life, and a certain time of the day, so related to each other, that the imagination plays between them with pleasure, and contemplates two similar objects, in one view, without embarrassment or confusion. Not only so, but,

258. In the fourth place, FIGURES are attended with this farther advantage, of *giving us* frequently a *much clearer* and *more striking view* of the *principal object*, than we could have if it were expressed in simple terms, and divested of its accessory idea.

Illus. 1. This is, indeed, their principal advantage, in virtue of which they are very properly said to *illustrate a subject*, or to throw light upon it. For they exhibit the object, on which they are employed, in a picturesque form; they can render an abstract conception, in some degree, an object of sense; they surround it with such circumstances as enable the mind to lay hold of it steadily, and to contemplate it fully.

Example "Those persons," says one, "who gain the hearts of most people, who are chosen as the companions of their softer hours, and their reliefs from anxiety and care, are seldom persons of shining qualities, or strong virtues: it is rather the soft green of the soul on which we rest our eyes, that are fatigued with beholding more glaring objects." Here, by a happy allusion to a colour, the whole conception is in one word conveyed clear and strong to the mind.

Illus. 2. By a well chosen figure, even *conviction* is assisted, and the impression of a truth upon the mind made more lively and forcible than it would otherwise be.

Examples. "When we dip too deep in pleasure, we always stir a sediment that renders it impure and noxious:"* "A heart boiling with violent passions, will always send up infatuating fumes to the head." An image that presents so much congruity between a moral and a sensible idea, serves, like an argument from analogy, to enforce what the author asserts, and to induce belief.

Illus. 3. Besides, whether we are endeavouring to raise *sentiments of pleasure* or *aversion*, we can always *heighten* the *emotion* by the figures which we introduce; leading the imagination to a train, either of *agreeable* or *disagreeable*, of *exalting* or *debasing ideas*, correspondent to the impression which we seek to make. When we want to render an *object beautiful* or *magnificent*, we *borrow images* from all the most *beautiful* or *splendid scenes of nature*; we thereby, naturally throw a lustre over our object; we enliven the reader's mind, and dispose him to go along with us, in the gay and pleasing impressions which we give him of the subject. This effect of figures is happily touched in the following lines of Dr. Akenside, and illustrated by a very sublime figure:

* Dr. Young.

——— Then the inexpressive strain
Diffuses its enchantment. Fancy dreams
Of sacred fountains and Elysian groves,
And vales of bliss, the intellectual Power
Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
And smiles.——— *Pleasures of Imagination, I.* 124.

Scholium. What we have now explained, concerning the character and advantages of figures, naturally leads us to reflect on the wonderful power of language; nor can we reflect on it without the highest admiration. What a fine vehicle is it now become for all the conceptions of the human mind; even for the most subtle and delicate workings of the imagination! What a pliant and flexible instrument in the hand of one who can employ it skilfully; prepared to take every form which he chuses to give it! Not content with a simple communication of ideas and thoughts, it paints those ideas to the eye; it gives colouring and *relievo*, even to the most abstract conceptions. In the figures which it uses, it sets mirrors before us, where we may, a second time, behold objects in their likeness. It entertains us, as with a succession of the most splendid pictures; disposes, in the most artificial manner, of the light and shade, for viewing every thing to the best advantage; in fine, from being a rude and imperfect interpreter of men's wants and necessities, it has now passed into an instrument of the most delicate and refined luxury.

259. All TROPES *are founded on the relation which one object bears to another;* in virtue of which, the name of the one can be substituted instead of the name of the other; and by such a substitution, the vivacity of the idea is commonly meant to be increased. These relations, some more, some less intimate, may all give rise to tropes.

260. To illustrate these relations, we have constructed the following

Table of Figures, which, among related objects, extend the properties of one to another.

I. An attribute of the cause, expressed as an attribute of the effect.

- - - - - - To my *advent'rous* song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar. *Paradise Lost.*

II. An attribute of the effect, expressed as an attribute of the cause.

No wonder, fallen such a *pernicious* height. *Par. Lost.*

III. An effect expressed as an attribute of the cause.

Jovial wine	*Musing* midnight
Giddy drink	*Panting* height
Drowsy night	*Astonished* thought.

And the *merry* bells ring round,
And the *jocund* rebecks sound. *Allegro.*

IV. An attribute for a subject bestowed upon one of its parts or members; as, *longing* arms.

It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pierced the *fearful* hollow of thine ear.*

* Romeo and Juliet, Act III. Scene 5.

V. A quality of the agent given to the instrument, with which it operates.

Why peep your *coward* swords half out of their shells?

VI. The means or instrument conceived to be the agent.

A broken rock the *force* of Pirus threw.

VII. The chief circumstance conceived to be the patient.

Whose *hunger* has not tasted food these three days†.

VIII. An attribute of the agent given to the subject, upon which it operates.

High-climbing hill. *Milton.*

IX. A quality of one subject given to another.

When shapeless age, and weak feeble limbs,
Should bring thy father to his *drooping* chair. *Shakespeare.*

By art, the pilot through the boiling deep,
And howling tempest, steers the *fearless* ship. *Iliad*, xxiii. 385.

X. A circumstance connected with a subject, expressed as a quality of the subject.

'Tis ours the chance of *fighting* fields to try. *Iliad*, i. 301.

261. The several relations upon which figures of speech are commonly founded, are epitomized in the following two tables: one of subjects expressed figuratively, and one of attributes.

FIRST TABLE.

Subjects expressed figuratively.

I. A word proper to one subject, employed figuratively, to express a resembling subject.

Illus. 1. There is no figure of speech so frequent, as that which is derived from the relation of resemblance; as, *morning* of life, for youth. (*Illus. Art.* 237.)

Analysis. The life of man resembles a natural day, in several particulars: the morning is the beginning of day; youth, the beginning of life; the morning is cheerful; so is youth, &c.

2. By another resemblance, a multitude of troubles are, a *sea* of trouble; and a bold warrior is, the *thunderbolt* of war.

Corol. This figure, above all others, affords pleasure to the mind, by variety of beauties. It possesses, among others, the beauty of a metaphor, or of a simile. A figure of speech, built upon resemblance, always suggests a comparison between the principal subject, and the accessory. Hence, by this figure, every good effect of a metaphor, or simile, may be produced in a short and lively manner.

II. A word proper to the effect, employed figuratively, to express the cause; as, *shadow*, for cloud; *glittering tower*, for helmet; *umbrage* or *shadow*, for tree.

Where the dun *umbrage* hangs. *Spring.* l. 1023.

† Jane Shore.

A *wound* is made to signify an arrow.

Vulnere non pedibus te consequar. *Ovid.*

Analysis. There is a peculiar *force* and *beauty* in this; the word, which signifies figuratively the principal subject, denotes it to be a *cause*, by suggesting the effect.

III. A word proper to the cause, employed figuratively to express the effect; as, *grief*, *sorrow*, for tears.

Again, Ulysses veil'd his pensive head:
Again, unmann'd, a show'r of *sorrow* shed.
Streaming *grief* his faded cheek bedewed.

Blindness, for darkness.

Cæcis erramus in nudis. *Æneid*, iii. 200.

Analysis. There is a peculiar beauty in this figure, similar to that in the former: the figurative name denotes the subject to be an *effect* by suggesting its cause.

IV. Two things being intimately connected, the proper name of the one employed figuratively to signify the other.

Illus. Day, for light. *Night*, for darkness; and hence, a *sudden* night. *Winter*, for a storm at sea:

Interea magno misceri murmure pontum,
Emissamque *Hyemem* sensit Neptunus. *Æneid*, i. 128.

V. A word proper to an attribute, employed figuratively to denote the subject.

Youth and *beauty* shall be laid in dust.

Majesty, for king; as in *Hamlet*, *Act* i. *Scene* 1.

What art thou, that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form,
In which the *majesty* of buried Denmark
Did sometimes march?

Analysis. The peculiar beauty of this figure arises from suggesting an attribute that embellishes the subject, or puts it in a stronger light.

VI. A complex term, employed figuratively to denote one of the component parts; as, *funus*, for a dead body; *burial*, for a grave.

VII. The name of one of the component parts, instead of the complex term; as, the *east*, for a country situated east from us. *Jovis vestigia servat*, for imitating Jupiter in general.

VIII. A word signifying time or place, employed figuratively to denote what is connected with it.

Illus. Clime, for season, or for a constitution of government: hence the expression, *merciful clime*, *fleecy winter*, for snow, *seculum felix*.

IX. A *part*, for the whole; as, the *pole*, for the earth; the *head*, for the person.

Triginta minas *pro capite* tuo dedi. *Plautus.*

Analysis. The peculiar beauty of this figure consists in marking that part, which makes the greatest figure.

X. The name of the container, to signify what is contained.

Illus. Grove, for birds in it; as, vocal *grove*. *Ships* for the seamen; as, agonizing *ships*. *Mountains* for the sheep pasturing on them; as, bleating *mountains*. The *kettle* for the water; as, the kettle *boils*.

XI. The name of the sustainer, to signify what is sustained.

Illus. Altar, for sacrifice; *field*, for the battle fought upon it; as, well-fought *field*. (§ X. *p.* 140.)

XII. The name of the materials, to signify the things made of them; as, *hemp*, for rope; *cold steel*, for a sword; *lead*, for a bullet.

XIII. The names of the Gods and Goddesses, employed figuratively, to signify what they patronize.

Illus. Jove for the air, *Mars* for war, *Venus* for beauty, *Cupid* for love, *Ceres* for corn, *Neptune* for the sea, *Vulcan* for fire.

This figure bestows great elevation upon the subject; and therefore ought to be confined to the higher strains of poetry.

SECOND TABLE.

Attributes expressed figuratively.

I. When two attributes are connected, the name of the one may be employed figuratively, to express the other.

Illus. Purity for virginity. These are attributes of the same person or thing; hence the expression, *virgin* snow, for pure snow; *virgin* gold, for gold unalloyed.

II. A word signifying properly an attribute of one subject, employed figuratively to express a resembling attribute of another subject.

Illus. 1. *Tottering* state, *imperious* ocean, *angry* flood, *raging* tempest, *shallow* fears.

> My sure divinity shall bear the shield,
> And edge thy sword to *reap* the glorious field. *Odyssey*, xx. 61.

2. *Black omen*, for an omen that portends bad fortune: as, *gler* odor *Virgil*.

Obs. The peculiar beauty of this figure, arises from suggesting a comparison.

III. A word proper to the subject, employed to express one of its attributes.

Illus. Mind, for intellect; *mind*, for resolution.

IV. When two subjects have a resemblance by a common quality, the name of the one subject may be employed figuratively, to denote that quality in the other; as, *summer*, for agreeable life.

V. The name of the instrument, made to signify the power of employing it.

> - - - - - Melpomene, cui liquidam pater
> Vocem cum *cithara*, dedit.

Scholium. The ample field of figurative expression, displayed in these tables, affords great scope for reasoning, as we shall find in the subsequent ANALYSES of figurative language.

CHAPTER II.

METAPHOR.

262. **METAPHOR** is a figure founded entirely on the resemblance which one subject bears to another. Hence, it is much allied to simile, or comparison; and is indeed no other than a comparison, expressed in an abridged form. (*Art.* 260.)

Illus. When of some great minister it is said, "that he upholds the state, like a pillar which supports the weight of a whole edifice," a comparison is made; but when it is said of such a minister, "that he is the pillar of the state," it is now become a metaphor.

Analysis. The comparison betwixt the minister and a pillar, is made in the mind; but is expressed without any of the words that denote comparison. The comparison is only insinuated, not expressed; the one object is supposed to be so like the other, that without formally drawing the comparison, the name of the one may be put in the place of the name of the other. "The minister is the pillar of the state." This, therefore, is a more lively and animated manner of expressing the resemblances which imagination traces among objects. There is nothing that delights the fancy more than this act of comparing things together, discovering resemblances between them, and describing them by their likeness. The mind thus employed, is exercised without being fatigued; and is gratified with the consciousness of its own ingenuity. (*Scholium, p.* 139.)

263. Though all metaphor imports *comparison*, and, therefore, is, in that respect, *a figure of thought*; yet, as the words in a metaphor are not taken literally, but changed from their proper to a figurative sense, the metaphor is commonly ranked among tropes or figures of words. (*Example, Art.* 245.) But, provided the nature of it be well understood, it signifies very little whether we call it a figure or a trope. (*Obs. Art.* 254.)

Illus. 1. We have confined it to the expression of resemblance between two objects. We must remark, however, that the word metaphor is sometimes used in a looser and more extended sense; for the application of a term in any figurative signification, whether the figure be founded on resemblance, or on some other relation which two objects bear to one another.

Example. For instance; when *gray hairs* are put for old age, as, "to bring one's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave;" some writers would call this a metaphor, though it is not properly one, but what rhetoricians call a *metonymy*; that is, the effect put for the cause; (§. II. p. 139.) "gray hairs" being the effect of old age, but not bearing any sort of resemblance to it.

264. Of all the figures of speech, *none comes so near to painting as metaphor.* Its peculiar effect is to give light and strength to description; to make intellectual ideas, in some sort, visible to the eye, by giving them colour, and substance, and sensible qualities. In order, however, to produce this effect, a delicate hand is required; for, by a very little inaccuracy, we are in hazard of introducing confusion, in place of promoting perspicuity. (*Art.* 257.)

Illus. Several rules, therefore, are necessary to be given for the proper management of metaphor. But, before entering on these, we shall give one instance of a very beautiful metaphor, that we may shew the figure to full advantage. We shall take our instance from Lord Bolingbroke's Remarks on the History of England. Just at the conclusion of his work, he is speaking of the behaviour of Charles I. to his last parliament: "In a word," says he, "about a month after their meeting, he dissolved them; and, as soon as he had dissolved them, he repented; but he repented too late of his rashness. Well might he repent, for the vessel was now full, and this last drop made the waters of bitterness overflow."—"Here," he adds, "we draw the curtain, and put an end to our remarks."

Analysis. Nothing could be more happily thrown off. The metaphor, we see, is continued through several expressions. The *vessel* is put for the state or temper of the nation already *full*, that is, provoked to the highest by former oppressions and wrongs; this *last drop*, stands for the provocation recently received by the abrupt dissolution of the parliament; and the *overflowing of the waters of bitterness*, beautifully expresses all the effects of resentment let loose by an exasperated people.

Scholia. Nothing forms a more spirited and dignified conclusion of a subject, than a figure of this kind happily placed at the close. We see the effect of it in this instance. The author goes off with a good grace; and leaves a strong and full impression of his subject on the reader's mind. A metaphor has frequently an advantage above a formal comparison. How much would the sentiment here have been enfeebled, if it had been expressed in the style of a regular simile, thus: "Well might he repent; for the state of the nation, loaded with grievances and provocation, resembled a vessel that was now full, and this superadded provocation, like the last drop infused, made their rage and resentment, as waters of bitterness, overflow." It has infinitely more spirit and force as it now stands, in the form of a metaphor. "Well might he repent; for the vessel was now full; and this last drop made the waters of bitterness overflow."

265. The first rule to be observed in the conduct of metaphors, is, that they *be suited* to the *nature* of the subject of which we treat: *neither too many, nor too gay; nor too elevated* for it; that we neither attempt to *force the subject*, by means of them, into a degree of *elevation* which is not congruous to it; nor, on the other hand, *allow it to sink* below its proper dignity. (*Art.* 258. *Illus.* 3.)

Illus. 1. This is a direction which belongs to all figurative language

and should be ever kept in view. Some metaphors are allowable, nay, beautiful in poetry, which it would be absurd and unnatural to employ in prose; some may be graceful in orations, which would be very improper in historical or philosophical composition.

2. We must remember that figures are the dress of our sentiments.

3. As there is a natural congruity between dress and the character or rank of the person who wears it, a violation of this congruity never fails to be injurious to the person; the same holds precisely as to the application of figures to sentiment.

4. The excessive or unseasonable employment of them is mere foppery in writing. It gives a boyish air to composition; and instead of raising a subject, in fact, diminishes its dignity. For, as in life, true dignity must be founded on character, not on dress and appearance, so the dignity of composition must arise from sentiment and thought, not from ornament. The affectation and parade of ornament, detract as much from an author, as they do from a man. (*Art.* 128.)

Corol. 1. Figures and metaphors, therefore, should, on no occasion, be stuck on too profusely; nor should they ever be such as refuse to accord with the strain of our sentiment.

2. Nothing can be more unnatural, than for a writer to carry on a strain of reasoning, in the same sort of figurative language which he would use in description. When he reasons, we look only for perspicuity; when he describes, we expect embellishment; when he divides, or relates, we desire plainness and simplicity.

Scholia. One of the greatest secrets in composition is, to know when to be simple. This always gives a heightening to ornament, in its proper place. The right disposition of the shade makes the light and colouring strike the more. "He is truly eloquent who can discourse of humble subjects in a plain style, who can treat important ones with dignity, and speak of things which are of a middle nature, in a temperate strain. For one who, upon no occasion, can express himself in a calm, orderly, distinct manner, when he begins to be on fire before his readers are prepared to kindle along with him, has the appearance of raving like a madman among persons who are in their senses, or of reeling like a drunkard, in the midst of sober company."* This admonition should be particularly attended to by young practitioners in the art of writing, who are apt to be carried away by an undistinguishing admiration of what is showy and florid, whether in its place or not.†

266. The second rule which we give, respects the *choice of objects*, from whence metaphors, and other figures, are to be drawn.

* "Is enim est eloquens, qui et humilia subtiliter, et magna graviter, et mediocria temperate, potest dicere. Nam qui nihil potest tranquille, nihil leuiter, nihil definite, distincte, potest dicere, is, cum non præparatis auribus inflammare rem cæpit, furere apud sanos, et quasi inter sobrios bacchari temulentus videtur" *Cicero.*

† What person of the least taste can bear the following passage in an historian? He is giving an account of the famous act of parliament against irregular marriages in England: "The bill," says he, "underwent a great number of alterations and amendments, which were not effected without violent contest." This is plain language, suited to the subject; and we naturally expect, that, he should go on in the same strain, to tell us, that after these contests, it was carried by a great majority of voices, and obtained the royal assent. But how does he express himself in finishing the period; "At length, however, it was floated through both houses on the tide of a great majority, and steered into the safe harbour of royal approbation." Nothing can be more puerile that such language. Smollett's History of England, quoted in the Critical Review for Oct. 1761, p. 251.

Illus. 1. The field for figurative language is very wide. All nature, to speak in the style of figures, opens its stores to us, and admits us to gather, from all sensible objects, whatever can illustrate intellectual or moral ideas. Not only the gay and splendid objects of sense, but the grave, the terrifying, and even the gloomy and dismal, may, on different occasions, be introduced into figures with propriety.

2. But we must beware of ever using such allusions as raise in the mind disagreeable, mean, vulgar, or dirty ideas. Even when metaphors are chosen in order to vilify and degrade any object, an author should study never to be nauseous in his allusions. But, in subjects of dignity, it is an unpardonable fault to introduce mean and vulgar metaphors.

Obs. 1. In the treatise on the Art of Sinking, in Dean Swift's works, there is a full and humorous collection of instances of this kind, wherein authors, instead of exalting, have contrived to degrade their subjects by the figures which they employed.

2. Authors of greater note than those which are there quoted, have at times fallen into this error. Archbishop Tillotson, for instance, is sometimes negligent in his choice of metaphors; as, when speaking of the day of Judgment, he describes the world, as "cracking about the sinners' ears."

3. Shakespeare, whose imagination was rich and bold, in a much greater degree than it was delicate, often fails here.

Example. The following is a gross transgression; in his Henry V., having mentioned a dung-hill, he presently raises a metaphor from the steam of it; and on a subject too, that naturally led to much nobler ideas:

> And those that leave their valiant bones in France,
> Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
> They shall be famed; for there the sun shall greet them,
> And draw their honours reeking up to heaven. *Act IV. Scene 8.*

267. In the third place, as metaphors should be drawn from objects of some dignity, so particular care should be taken that the *resemblance*, which is the *foundation* of the metaphor, *be clear* and *perspicuous, not far-fetched, nor difficult to discover.* The transgression of this rule makes, what is called harsh or forced metaphors, which are always displeasing, because they puzzle the reader, and instead of illustrating the thought, render it perplexed and intricate.

Illus. With metaphors of this kind Cowley abounds. He, and some of the writers of his age, seemed to have considered it as the perfection of wit, to hit upon likenesses between objects which no other person could have discovered; and, at the same time, to pursue those metaphors so far, that it requires some ingenuity to follow them out, and comprehend them. This makes a metaphor resemble an enigma; and is the very reverse of Cicero's rule on this head: "Every metaphor should be modest, so that it may carry the appearance of having been led, not of having forced itself into the place of that word whose room it occupies; that it may seem to have come thither of its own accord, and not by constraint."*

* "Verecunda debet esse, translatio; ut deducta esse in alienum locum non irruisse; atque ut voluntario non vi venisse videatur." *De Oratore, lib. iii. c. 53.*

2. To be new, and not vulgar, is a beauty. Trite and common resemblances should indeed be avoided in our metaphors. But when they are fetched from some likeness too remote, and lying too far out of the road of ordinary thought, then, besides their obscurity, they have also the disadvantage of appearing laboured, and, as the French call it, "recherché." Metaphors, like all other ornaments, lose their whole grace, when they do not seem natural and easy.

3. It is but a bad and ungraceful softening, which writers sometimes use for a harsh metaphor, when they palliate it with the expression, *as it were*. This is but an awkward parenthesis; and metaphors, which need this apology of an *as it were*, would, generally, have been better omitted. (*See Art.* 166.) Metaphors, too, borrowed from any of the sciences, especially such of them as belong to particular professions, are almost always faulty by their obscurity. (*Art.* 84. *Illus.*)

268. In the fourth place, it must be carefully attended to, in the conduct of metaphors, never to *jumble metaphorical and plain language* together: never to construct a period so, that part of it must be understood metaphorically, part literally: this always produces a most disagreeable confusion.

Example 1. Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost,
His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast;
Now from my fond embrace by tempests torn,
Our other column of the state is borne,
Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent.* *Odyssey IV.* 962.

Analysis. Here, in one line, her son is figured as a column; and in the next, he returns to be a person, to whom it belongs to take adieu, and to ask consent. This is inconsistent. The poet should either have kept himself to the idea of man, in the literal sense; or if he figured him by a column, he should have ascribed nothing to him but what belonged to it. He was not at liberty to ascribe to that column the actions and properties of a man. Such unnatural mixtures render the image indistinct; leaving it to waver, in our conception, between the figurative and the literal sense.

Example 2. Pope, elsewhere, addressing himself to the king, says,

To thee the world its present homage pays,
The harvest early, but mature the praise.

Analysis. This, though not so gross, is a fault, however, of the same kind. It is plain, that had not the rhyme misled him to the choice of an improper phrase, he would have said,

The harvest early, but mature the crop:

and so would have continued the figure which he had begun. Whereas, by dropping it unfinished, and by employing the literal word, *praise*,

* In the original, there is no allusion to a column, and the metaphor is regularly supported:

Ἡ πριν μεν ποσιν ἐσθλον απώμεσα θυμολεοντα
Παντοιης αρετῆσι κεκασμενον ἐν Δαναοισι
Εσθλον, τυ κλεος ἐυρυ καθ' Ἑλλαδα και μεσον Αργος
Νυν δ' αυ παιδ' αγαπητον ανηρειψαντο θυελλαι
Ἀκλεα εκ μεγαρων, νδ' ὁρμηθεστος ακυσα. Δ. 734.

when we were expecting something that related to the harvest, the figure is broken, and the two members of the sentence have no proper correspondence with each other:

The *harvest* early, but mature the *praise.*

Example 3. The works of Ossian abound with beautiful and correct metaphors: such as that on a hero: "In peace, thou art the gale of spring; in war, the mountain storm." Or this, on a woman; "She was covered with the light of beauty; but her heart was the house of pride."

Exception. They afford, however, one instance of the fault we are now censuring: "Trothal went forth with the stream of his people, but they met a rock: for Fingal stood unmoved; broken they rolled back from his side: nor did they roll in safety; the spear of the king pursued their flight."

Analysis. At the beginning, the metaphor is very beautiful. The stream, the unmoved rock, the waves rolling back broken, are expressions employed in the proper and consistent language of figure; but in the end, when we are told, "they did not roll in safety, because the spear of the king pursued their flight," the literal meaning is improperly mixed with the metaphor; they are, at one and the same time, presented to us as *waves* that *roll*, and men that may be *pursued* and *wounded with a spear.*

269. In the fifth place, never make *two different* metaphors *meet on one object.* This is what is called mixed metaphor, and is indeed one of the grossest abuses of this figure; such as Shakespeare's expression, "to take arms against a sea of troubles." This makes a most unnatural medley, and confounds the imagination entirely.

Illus. Quinctilian has sufficiently guarded us against it. "We must be particularly attentive to end with the same kind of metaphor with which we have begun. Some, when they begin the figure with a tempest, conclude it with a conflagration; which forms a shameful inconsistency."*

Example 1. The charm dissolves apace,
And as the morning steals upon the night,
Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason. *Tempest.*

Analysis. What an inconsistent groupe of objects is brought together in this passage, which professes to describe persons recovering their judgment after the enchantment, that held them, was dissolved! So many ill-sorted things are here joined, that the mind can see nothing clearly; the morning *stealing* upon the darkness, and at the same time, *melting* it; the senses of men *chasing fumes, ignorant fumes*, and *fumes* that *mantle.*

Example 2. So again in Romeo and Juliet:

——— as glorious,
As is a winged messenger from heaven,
Unto the white upturned wondering eyes

* "Id imprimis est custodiendum, ut quo genere cœperis translationis, hoc finias. Multi autem cum initium a tempestate sumserunt, incendio aut ruina finiunt; quæ est inconsequentia rerum fœdissima."

Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Analysis. Here, the angel is represented as, at one moment, *bestriding* the clouds, and *sailing* upon the air; and upon the *bosom* of the air too; which forms such a confused picture, that it is impossible for any imagination to comprehend it.

Example 3. More correct writers than Shakespeare sometimes fall into this error of mixing metaphors.

I bridle in my struggling muse with pain,
That longs to launch into a bolder strain.*

Analysis. The muse, figured as a horse, may be *bridled;* but when we speak of *launching*, we make it a ship; and by no force of imagination, can it be supposed both a horse and a ship at one moment; *bridled*, to hinder it from *launching*. Were we to try this metaphor by Addison's own rule, namely, to suppose the *figure* painted, it would appear more grotesque than any of Hogarth's subjects. That the muse, from her connexion with the winged horse Pegasus, might sometimes require the bridle, is not perhaps very unnatural. But were she painted in an attitude in which the bridle prevented her from launching or jumping into the sea; or were a picture to exhibit a ship launched, not into the sea, but upon a sheet of paper, or into a song, the spectator would feel something of the disposition inspired by the monster of Horace,

Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici.

But the muse is a goddess. Now to bridle a goddess is no very delicate idea. But why must she be bridled? because she longs to launch; an act which was never hindered by a bridle. And whither will she launch? into a nobler strain. She is in the first line a *goddess*, or a *horse*, in the second, a *boat* or a *javelin*, (for both may be launched) and the care of the poet is to keep his *horse*, or his *boat*, or his *spear*, from *singing*.

270. Addison's rule is a good one for examining the propriety of metaphors, when we doubt whether or not they be of the mixed kind: namely, that we should *try to form a picture upon them*, and consider how the parts would agree, and what sort of figure the whole would present, when delineated with a pencil. By this means we should become sensible, whether inconsistent circumstances were mixed, and a monstrous image thereby produced, as in all those faulty instances which have been given; or whether the object was throughout presented in one natural and consistent point of view.

271. As metaphors ought never to be mixed; so in the sixth place, we should *avoid crowding* them together on the *same object.* Supposing each of the metaphors to be preserved distinct, yet, if they be heaped on one another, they

* Addison.

produce a confusion somewhat of the same kind with the mixed metaphor.

Example 1. "There is a time, when factions, by the vehemence of their fermentation, stun, and disable one another*."

Analysis. The noble author represents factions, first, as discordant fluids, the mixture of which produces violent fermentation; but he quickly relinquishes this view of them, and imputes to them operations and effects, consequent only on the supposition of their being solid bodies in motion. They maim and dismember one another by forcible collisions.

Example 2. "Those whose minds are dull and heavy do not easily penetrate into the folds and intricacies of an affair, and therefore can only scum off what they find at the top†."

Analysis. That the writer had a right to represent his affair, whatever it was, either as a bale of cloth or a fluid, nobody can deny. But the laws of common sense and perspicuity demanded of him to keep it either the one or the other, because it could not be both at the same time. It was absurd, therefore, after he had penetrated the folds of it, an operation competent only on the supposition of its being some pliable body, to speak of scumming off what floated on the surface, which could not be performed unless it was a fluid.

272. The only other rule concerning metaphors, which we shall add, is, that *they be not too far pursued.* If the resemblance on which the figure is founded, be long dwelt upon, and carried into all its minute circumstances, we make an allegory instead of a metaphor; we tire the reader, who soon becomes weary of this play of fancy; and we render our discourse obscure. This is called straining a metaphor.

Critick 1. Cowley deals in this to excess; and to this error is owing, in a great measure, that intricacy and harshness, in his figurative language, which we before remarked. (*Art.* 207.)

2. Lord Shaftesbury is sometimes guilty of pursuing his metaphors too far. Fond, to a high degree, of every decoration of style, when once he had hit upon a figure that pleased him, he was extremely loth to part with it.

3. Dr. Young also often trespasses in the same way. The merit, however, of this writer, in figurative language, is great, and deserves to be remarked. No writer, ancient or modern, had a stronger imagination than Dr. Young, or one more fertile in figures of every kind. His metaphors are often new, and often natural and beautiful. But his imagination was strong and rich, rather than delicate and correct. Hence, in his Night Thoughts, there prevail an obscurity, and a hardness in his style. The metaphors are frequently too bold, and frequently too far pursued; the reader is dazzled rather than enlightened; and kept constantly on the stretch to keep pace with the author.

4. Of all the English authors, none is so happy in his metaphors as Addison. His imagination was neither so rich nor so strong as Dr. Young's; but far more chaste and delicate. Perspicuity, natural grace, and ease, always distinguish his figures. They are neither

* Bolingbroke. † Swift.

harsh nor strained; they never appear to have been studied or sought after; but seem to rise of their own accord from the subject, and constantly embellish it.

Scholia 1. Metaphors expressed by single words may, it seems, be introduced on every occasion, from the most careless effusions of conversation, to the highest and most passionate expression of tragedy; and on all these occasions they are, perhaps, the most beautiful and significant language that can be employed. There is no doubt of the justness of this observation with regard to any species of speaking or writing, except that which denotes violent passion, concerning which the practice of the most correct performers is not uniform; some of them rejecting, others admitting, the use of such figures.

2. Short metaphors appear with perfect propriety in oratory, memoirs, essays, novels, but particularly in history. The historian is scarcely permitted to indulge in hunting after comparisons; he is seldom allowed to introduce the more elevated and poetical figures of apostrophe and personification; he is not even at liberty to amuse with metaphors extended to many circumstances of resemblance, but to those expressed in single or few words, he has the most approved access. Such ornaments are the proper implements of a vigorous and decisive mind, which has leisure only to snatch a ray of embellishment from a passing object, without turning aside from its capital pursuit. The superior attention of the historian to the matter of which he treats, the dignity and gravity of his style, which ought to correspond to the importance of his matter, call upon him to communicate his thoughts in the most correct, perspicuous, and forcible language; and such, in a serene state of the mind, is the language of short metaphor.

3. Both Shakespeare and Otway conceived short metaphors to be perfectly consistent with the most violent agitations of passion. It is in vain to appeal to the authority of other tragic poets. They are unanimous for the use of similar metaphors in similar situations. Many of them, indeed, have so overloaded their pathetic scenes with this brilliant ornament, that it obscures the meaning, diminishes the impression, and sometimes disgusts the reader.

4. But extended metaphors, which chiefly amuse the imagination by a great variety of pretty and pleasant resemblances, are much more circumscribed in their appearance. They are too refined to occur in conversation, or on any occasion that allows not time for recollection, and for tracing similitudes which are at least so remote and unexpected as to surprise and captivate. They present themselves with perfect grace, in pulpit-oratory, in political writings, in works of criticism, and in essays. But their peculiar province is descriptive poetry, and the dispassionate parts of epic. They are inconsistent with violent passion, and are seldom introduced with success into tragedy. They are calculated entirely to please the imagination. They interfere with all the strong feelings of the heart. The mind that can either utter or relish them may be gay and elevated, but must be composed and tranquil. Under the pressure of deep distress, they are disgusting and intolerable.

CHAPTER III.

COMPARISONS OR SIMILES.

273. **COMPARISONS** or *similes* differ chiefly from metaphors in the *vigour of imagination* with which they are conceived. In the use of *metaphors*, we suppose the *primary object transformed* into the *resembling one.* In the use of *comparisons* we soar not so high, but content ourselves with remarking *similitude* merely.

Illus. 1. In all comparisons there should be found something new or surprising in order to please and illustrate. There is nothing new or surprising in the resemblance of the individuals of the same species, as when we say, one man, or one horse, or one oak, is like another; because these individuals are formed by nature similar, and no comparison instituted between them can be supposed to produce any novelty or surprise. To find, then, resemblances which are new or surprising, and which, consequently, may produce pleasure or illustration, we must search for them where they are not commonly to be expected, between things of different species.

Example. If, for instance, I discover a resemblance between a man and a horse in swiftness, between a man and an oak in strength, or between a man and a rock in steadiness, such resemblances, being new, and generally unobserved, excite surprise and pleasure, and improve my conceptions of the swiftness, strength, and steadiness, of the man.

Corol. Hence results the first general principle concerning good comparisons of resemblance; they must be drawn from one species of things to another, and never instituted between things of the same species.

Illus. 2. Again, when we place a great object opposite to a little one, a beautiful picture to an indifferent one, or one shade of the same colour to another; we are surprised to find, that things which seemed so much alike differ so widely. We conceive the beauties and defects of the objects contrasted greater, perhaps, than they really are, at least much greater than they appear when surveyed apart.

Corol. Hence is derived the second principle respecting comparisons, that contrasts must be instituted between things of the same species, because no pleasure or illustration can result from finding dissimilitude between things naturally different.

Illus. 3. As it is necessary there should be resemblance in all comparisons, it is obvious that the objects of different senses cannot furnish foundation for them. There is no resemblance between a sound and a colour, a smell, and a surface of velvet.

Corol. Comparisons, then, must farther take place between the objects of the same sense; and, as the sight is the most lively and distinct of all the senses, and the ideas it communicates make the deepest impression on the mind, the most beautiful and striking comparisons are deduced from the objects of this sense. *(See the Ex. and Analysis to Art.* 218.)

Illus. 4. But though the far greater part of comparisons result from the resemblance of the qualities of sensible objects alone, yet they are sometimes instituted between the qualities of sensible and intellectual objects.

Example. Thus, Shakespeare compares adversity to a toad, and slander to the bite of a crocodile.

Scholium. In all these cases, however, the abstract or intellectual object is personified, and the comparison is founded on the supposed resemblance which the qualities of the intellectual object bear to those of the sensible object, after the former also has become a sensible object.

Illus. 5. In addition to the kinds of similes already explained, there is another that frequently occurs, in which the *effects only* of two objects are compared. The same analogy takes place with regard to them, which was formerly observed to appear in the resemblance of the sound of words to their sense. (*Art.* 225.) The objects compared are not perhaps similar in their qualities, at least the merit of the figure does not depend on this circumstance, but upon the *similarity* of the *impressions* or *emotions* they produce in the mind.

Examples. Upon this principle, the following comparisons are successfully framed.

1. "Often, like the evening sun, comes the memory of former times on my soul*."

2. "The music was like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul†."

3. "Sorrow, like a cloud on the sun, shades the soul of Clessamour‡."

4. "Pleasant are the words of the song, and lovely are the tales of other times. They are like the dew of the morning on the hill of roses, when the sun is faint on its side, and the lake is settled and blue in the vale‖."

Analysis. There is no resemblance between the evening sun and the memory of past joys, between sorrow and a cloud, or between the words of the song, and the dew of the morning; but every person must perceive, that by these objects similar impressions or emotions are excited in the mind.

274. All comparisons may be reduced to the following heads. I. Those which improve our conceptions of the objects they are brought to illustrate,—we call *explaining comparisons.* II. Those which augment the pleasure of imagination by a splendid assemblage of other adjacent and agreeable objects,—we call *embellishing comparisons.* III. And, finally, those which elevate or depress the principal object, an operation often requisite in writing, but more particularly in speaking,—we call *comparisons of advantage,* or of *disadvantage.*

275. All manner of subjects admit of *explaining comparisons.* Let an author be reasoning ever so strictly, or treating the most abstruse point in philosophy, he may very pro-

* Ossian. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. ‖ Ibid.

perly introduce a comparison, merely with a view to make his subject better understood.

Example. Of this nature is the following in Harris's Hermes, employed to explain a very abstract point, the distinction between the powers of sense and imagination in the human mind. "As wax," says he, "would not be adequate to the purpose of signature, if it had not the power to retain as well as to receive the impression, the same holds of the soul with respect to sense and imagination. Sense is its receptive power; imagination its retentive. Had it sense without imagination, it would not be as wax, but as water, where, though all impressions be instantly made, yet as soon as they are made they are instantly lost."

Illus. In comparisons of this nature the understanding is concerned much more than the fancy: and therefore the only rules to be observed, with respect to them, are, I. That they be clear; II. That they be useful; III. That they tend to render our conception of the principal object more distinct; and IV. That they do not lead our view aside, and bewilder it with any false light.

276. The most vigorous imagination can scarcely be supposed to have conceived more striking comparisons, or better adapted to *improve* our conceptions of the principal object, than the following ones of Shakespeare. Describing the effects of concealed love, he makes this happy comparison:

"She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm in the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek. She pined in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat, like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief*."

277. *Embellishing comparisons,*—those with which we are chiefly concerned at present, as figures of speech—are introduced not so much with a view to inform and instruct, as to *adorn* the subject of which we treat; and they are those, indeed, that most frequently occur.

Illus. Resemblance is the foundation of this figure. We must not, however, take resemblance, in too strict a sense, for actual similitude and likeness of appearance. Two objects may sometimes be very happily compared to one another, though they resemble each other, strictly speaking, in nothing; only because they agree in the effects which they produce upon the mind; because they raise a train of similar, or, what may be called, concordant ideas; so that the remembrance of the one, when recalled, serves to strengthen the impression made by the other. (*Illus.* 5. *Art.* 273.)

Example 1. To describe the nature of soft and melancholy music, Ossian says, "The music of Carryl was, like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul."

Analysis. This is happy and delicate. Yet surely, no kind of music has any resemblance to a feeling of the mind, such as the memory of

* Twelfth Night, Act II. Sc. 4.

past joys. Had it been compared to the voice of the nightingale, or the murmur of the stream, as it would have been by some ordinary pôet, the likeness would have been more strict; but, by founding his simile upon the effect which Carryl's music produced, Ossian, while he conveys a very tender image, gives us, at the same time, a much stronger impression of the nature and strain of that music: "Like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul."

Example 2. Homer introduces a most charming night-scene, while his main object is only to illustrate the state of the Grecian camp after a battle.

"The troops, exulting, sat in order round,
And beaming fires illumin'd all the ground.
As when the moon, resplendent orb of night,
O'er heaven's pure azure shed her sacred light;
When not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene,
And not a breath disturbs the deep serene;
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellow verdure spread,
And tipt with silver ev'ry mountain's head.
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies.
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the night,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays!"

Analysis. This simile needs no comment to display its beauties. Not only is the primary object, the Grecian fires, elucidated by the splendid resemblance of the glowing stars, but the imagination is farther captivated by a delightful collection of connected objects, which together concur to form an extensive and interesting picture.

Scholium. Such comparisons not only supply the most striking illustrations of the objects they are brought to illuminate, but embellish also the general prospect by occasional openings into beautiful adjacent fields. They operate like episodes in a long work, which relax and regale the mind, without distracting it from its capital pursuit. They produce an effect similar to what happens to the traveller, from surveying in his course unexpected and surprising scenes of nature or of art. He turns aside a moment to contemplate them, and then resumes his journey with redoubled ardour and delight.

278. The *third* sort of *comparisons* are employed to *elevate* or *depress* the *principal object.*

Example 1. The following example must aggrandise our conceptions of the valour of Hector, howsoever great we can suppose it to have been in reality.

"Girt in surrounding flames, he seems to fall
Like fire from Jove, and bursts upon them all;
Bursts as a wave, that from the clouds impends,
And swell'd with tempest o'er the ship descends.
White are the decks with foam; the winds aloud
Howl o'er the masts, and ring through every shroud.
Pale, trembling, tired, the sailors freeze with fears,
And instant death in every wave appears.
So pale the Greeks the eyes of Hector meet,
The chief so thunders, and so shakes the fleet."

Example 2. The following quotation will explain the manner in which comparisons operate to depress the primary object. Milton has

employed a most expressive and successful figure to vilify the courage and resistance of the fallen angels:

" Gabriel ———— as a herd
Of goats, or tim'rous flock, together thronged,
Drove them before him, thunder-struck, pursued
With terrors and with furies, to the bounds
And crystal wall of heaven."

Example 3. Shakespeare could not have devised a more effectual method of exposing the character of a fop, than by contrasting him with his most valourous hero, Hotspur. The passage supplies a pertinent illustration of the nature of contrasts, and of their powers to diminish or depress. Hotspur thus addresses the king about the prisoners whom he had taken, and whom he had been accused of refusing to surrender:

" ——— My liege, I did deny no prisoners,
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,
Came there a certain lord, neat, trimly dress'd,
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reap'd,
Shav'd like a stubble-land at harvest home.
He was perfumed like a milliner;
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose. And still he smil'd and talk'd:
And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He call'd them untaught slaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility.
With many holiday and lady terms
He question'd me. Among the rest demanded
My prisoners in your majesty's behalf:
I, all smarting with my wounds, being gall'd
To be so pester'd with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answer'd negligently; I know not what;
He should, or he should not; for it made me mad,
To see him shine so bright, and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman,
Of guns, and drums, and wounds. ———
And telling me, the sovereign'st thing on earth
Was parmacety for an inward bruise;
And that it was a pity, so it was,
That this villainous salt-petre should be digg'd
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroyed
So cowardly; and but for these vile guns,
He would himself have been a soldier."

Obs. Having explained the nature of comparisons, and illustrated the purposes which they are calculated to serve, to guard the student against errors, we shall enumerate the capital mistakes committed in the use of these figures; and then conclude the chapter by some remarks on the propriety of the occasions in which they may be introduced.

279. *Comparisons* should *not be instituted between objects,* the *resemblance* of which is *either obscure, faint,* or *remote.*

Example. The following simile was intended by Milton to illustrate the anxiety with which Satan traversed the creation, in order to find out subjects for destruction and revenge.

" As when a vulture on Imaus bred,
Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar bounds,

Dislodging from a region scarce of prey,
To gorge the flesh of lambs or yearling kids,
On hills where flocks are fed, flies to the springs
Of Ganges or Hydaspes Indian streams,
But in his way lights on the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their eany waggons light;
So on this windy sea of land, the fiend
Walk'd up and down alone, bent on his prey."

Analysis. The objects contained in this comparison are so little known, even to those who claim the character of being learned, and they are so totally unknown to the greater part of readers, that it has the appearance of a riddle, or a pompous parade of erudition, rather than of a figure to illustrate something less conspicuous and striking than itself. Many of the similes, also, which were frequent and beautiful among the Greeks and Romans, as those drawn from the lion, the tiger, the wolf, the sphinx, the griffin, animals with the characters and properties of which they were supposed to be well acquainted, are retained by modern poets with much impropriety. To the learned they are destitute of novelty, an essential ingredient in every good comparison; to the unlearned, they are involved in much greater obscurity than the subjects they are brought to illuminate.

280. Comparisons should *not be deduced from objects which rise much above, or fall much below the primary object;* nor should they suggest *feelings discordant* with the tone of the emotion which the object prompts. If a comparison soar too high, it throws ridicule, instead of embellishment, on the object it is intended to adorn; the latter suffering from contrast, instead of being elevated by similitude.

Example 1. The subsequent comparison is reprehensible in this view. Homer paints the noise of opening the great lock of the repositories of Ulysses, by a comparison that borders on burlesque:

"Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
So roar'd the lock when it released the spring."

281. If, again, a comparison be *destitute of dignity*, some portion of its *insignificance* is *transferred* to the *principal object.*

Example. Milton describes the surprise of the fallen angels by a similitude which savours of levity.

"They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing; as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake."

Analysis. Milton did not intend to ridicule the appearance of fallen angels by this comparison; if he had so intended, he would have deserved applause, for every reader feels how successful he would have been.

Example 2. Homer paints the equality of the contest between the Greeks and Trojans, in a well-fought field, by the equilibrium of a balance destined to weigh wool.

" As when two scales are charg'd with doubtful loads,
From side to side the trembling balance nods,
(While some laborious matron, just and poor,
With nice exactness weighs her woolly store),
Till poised aloft, the resting beam suspends
Each equal weight; nor this nor that descends.
So stood the war; till Hector's matchless might,
With fates prevailing, turn'd the scale of flight.
Fierce as a whirlwind up the wall he flies,
And fires his host with loud repeated cries."

Scholium. Similes like these not only degrade the principal object, but they hurt it in another point of view, they disgust the imagination by a reversal of that order of ideas which is the most pleasant. In transitions from one object to another, the most agreeable succession is, to rise from the less to the greater. The mind inclines to extend its views, and to enlarge the sphere of its gratifications. In reversing this order of succession, it holds an opposite course. It is obliged to retrench its views, and to circumscribe its enjoyments; an operation manifestly unpleasant.

282. But *comparisons* are still *more censurable,* when they prompt *feelings discordant* with the aim of the principal object, or when they suggest *sentiments painful* or *disagreeable.*

Example. Addison, speaking of the later Greeks' poems, in the shape of eggs, wings, and altars, introduces the following similitude: " The poetry was to contract or dilate itself according to the mould in which it was cast; in a word, the verses were to be cramped or extended to the dimensions of the frame prepared for them, and to undergo the fate of those persons whom the tyrant Procrustes used to lodge in his iron bed; if they were too short, he stretched them on the rack; and if they were too long, he chopped off a part of their body, till they fitted the couch he had prepared for them."

Analysis. The comparison is abundantly pertinent, but the tone of it is totally discordant with that of the subject which it is brought to illustrate. The pleasantry inspired by the foolish efforts of the minor poets is extinguished by the horror excited at the conduct of Procrustes.

283. It is to be observed, in the last place, that *comparisons should never be founded on resemblances which are too obvious and familiar,* nor on those which are *imaginary.*

Illus. 1. To compare love to a fire, violent passion to a tempest, virtue to the sun, or distress to a flower dropping its head, are all similes, either so obvious or so trite, as long ago to have lost all power of pleasing.

Illus. 2. In comparisons founded on *imaginary* resemblances, the literal sense of the comparison bears an analogy to the metaphorical sense of the primary object. Thus, chastity is cold metaphorically, and an icicle is cold naturally; and for this whimsical reason, a chaste woman is compared to an icicle. The best poets have either indulged in such exceptionable similes, or have inadvertently adopted them.

Examples. Thus Shakespeare, in Coriolanus:

" The noble sister of Poplicola,
The moon of Rome; chaste as an icicle
That's curled by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Diana's temple."

Example 2. Lord Bolingbroke supposes a similitude between the discovery of truth, from comparing the accounts of different historians, and the production of fire by the collision of flint and steel: "Where their sincerity as to fact is doubtful, we strike out truth by a confrontation of different accounts, as we strike out sparks of fire by the collision of flint and steel."

Analysis. To illustrate the futility of such comparisons, let us change the expression of the last example, and the shadow of resemblance will vanish: "Where historians differ in their accounts of the same transaction, whether prompted by insincerity, or any other reprehensible disposition, we discover the truth by comparing them, and making them correct one another, and we generate fire by the collision of flint and steel." As the act of comparing different authors can scarcely be called collision, so different authors have no analogy with flint and steel. The word *strike*, used figuratively in the first member of the sentence, and literally in the second member, seems to have prompted the author to employ this imaginary comparison.

284. *Extended similes* may be introduced with advantage on various occasions. They are consistent with abstract disquisition, and with perfect coolness and composure of mind. Such gentle appeals to the imagination, even in philosophical composition, always relieve and amuse the reader, and often add illustration to pleasure.

285. There remains another species of composition, in which long and circumstantial comparisons frequently appear; it is that placid and feeble composition which can scarcely be said to instruct, for it contains little research or argument, but which has for its capital aim, to amuse the imagination by a number of pretty or familiar resemblances.

Obs. Though similes are often the work of the boldest and most fervid fancy, yet none of the ornaments of language are perhaps more allied to deficiency of genius and taste, both in the writer and the reader.

286. Long comparisons can scarcely be admitted with propriety into other productions than those we have enumerated. History, in the hands of all writers of genius, has rejected them with disdain, though it admits short similitudes restricted to the mere province of illustration.

Example. Hume thus characterises Shakespeare: "There may remain a suspicion that we over-rate the greatness of his genius, in the same manner as bodies appear more gigantic, by their being disproportioned or mis-shapen."

Obs. If any one chooses to learn from experience the repugnance between the spirit of history and circumstantial comparisons, he may have recourse to Strada, author of the History of the Belgic War. He will there find, that the too frequent use of this ornament diminishes the dignity and the credibility of the performance, and communica to a relation of truth much of the levity and frivolity of a romance.

287. Oratory, for a similar reason, repudiates lengthened similes, though it admits short ones, and abounds with other figures; particularly interrogation, metaphor, and personification.

Illus. In the more animated orations of Cicero, there is scarcely to be found a single comparison of any extent. Demosthenes, still more ardent, more rarely indulges in the use of them. The minds of these illustrious orators were too deeply engaged with their matter, to be attentive to beauties calculated only to please. They aimed at the instruction and conviction of their hearers, not to captivate their imaginations. They would have been ashamed to appear to have spent their time in ransacking nature for resemblances, however pertinent and brilliant, if not absolutely necessary. The ardour and penetration of their minds would not have been, perhaps, very favourable to their success, had they condescended to hunt for such puerile and declamatory ornaments.

288. But of all improper occasions on which circumstantial similes can make their appearance, the most improper are the tender scenes of tragedy; and yet such inconsistences present themselves in some dramatic productions of no small reputation.

Illus. Addison was endued with much sensibility in respect of sublime sentiments and the peculiarities of manners; but he seems to have been incapable of conceiving any high degree of passion. His characters, accordingly, in the tragedy of Cato, display many of those splendid and dignified conceptions which he had imbibed in perusing the orators and poets of ancient Rome, but all savour of the Stoicism of Cato; and when they attempt to utter the language of passion, they deviate into declamation, or adopt the frigid expression of tame spectators. The scene between Lucia and Portius, in the third act, will afford ample proof of the justness of these remarks.

Example 1. When Portius, from preceding behaviour and acknowledgment on the part of Lucia, had every reason to believe he was favoured with her love, and was anticipating the satisfaction of such a connection, in the most unexpected change of disposition, she informs him that she had made a vow never to marry him. Never was a man thrown more suddenly from the pinnacle of felicity, into the abyss of despair. How does he express himself in such a critical situation? He introduces a comparison in the language of a spectator, descriptive of the attitude in which his agitation had placed him, without uttering a single sentiment of passion:

> "Fixt in astonishment, I gaze upon thee,
> Like one just blasted by a stroke from heaven,
> Who pants for breath, and stiffens, yet alive
> In dreadful looks,—a monument of woe."

Example 2. Lucia replies in the same language of description:

> "Oh! stop those sounds,
> Those killing sounds; why dost thou frown upon me?
> My blood runs cold, my heart forgets to heave,
> And life itself goes out at thy displeasure."

Analysis. One would imagine, that the author of the Rehearsal had in view such unnatural composition. But we cannot help being surprised that Addison did not profit by his remarks. "Now here she must make a simile," says Mr. Bays. "Where's the necessity of that?" replies Mr. Smith. "Because she's surprised; that's a general rule; you must ever make a simile when you are surprised; 'tis the new way of writing."

289. But although such deliberate and highly-finished comparisons are inconsistent with every violent exertion of passion, yet *short similes*, adapted entirely to the purpose of illustration, may appear in the most *passionate scenes*.

Illus. There is scarcely a tragedy in any language, in which passion assumes so high a tone, and is so well supported, as in the Moor of Venice; and yet, in one of the most passionate scenes of that passionate tragedy, no reader can hesitate about the propriety of introducing two similes, besides several bold metaphors.

Example. Othello thus deliberates, in the deepest agitation, about the murder of his wife, on account of her supposed infidelity:

"It is the cause, my soul,
Let me not name it to you ye chaste stars!
It is the cause;—yet I'll not shed her blood,
Nor scar that whiter skin of her's than snow,
And smooth as monumental alabaster;
Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.
Put out the *light*, and then put out thy *light*.
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy flaming light restore.
Should I repent; but once put out *thy* light,
Thou cunningest pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is the Promethean heat
That can thy light relumine.
When I have pluck'd thy rose,
I cannot give it vital growth again,
It needs must wither."

Analysis. The comparisons of the skin of Desdemona to snow in point of whiteness, and to alabaster in point of smoothness, are admirably adapted to improve our ideas of her beauty, and consequently to heighten the tide of the Moor's distress, in being obliged to put to death, from principles of honour, a woman he had so much reason to admire. The meditation on the resemblance between her life and the light of a taper is striking and melancholy; and the comparison between her death and the plucking of a rose is perfectly concordant with the same sentiments.

Corol. Short similes, which aid the impression by rendering our conceptions more vivid and significant, are therefore consistent with the highest swell of passion.

CHAPTER IV.

PERSONIFICATION.

290. **PERSONIFICATION**, or *Prosopopeia*, is a figure which consists in ascribing *life and action to inanimate objects*. It has its origin in the influence that imagination and passion have upon our perceptions and opinions.

Illus. If our perceptions and opinions were dictated and regulated entirely by the understanding, nothing could appear more whimsical and absurd than to confound so far one of the capital distinctions in nature, as to interchange the properties of animated and inanimated substances, and to ascribe sentiment and action, not only to vegetables, but to earth, fire, water, and every other existence most remote from activity and sensibility. Strange, however, as this practice may appear to reason, such is the ascendancy of imagination and passion, that nothing is more frequent and meritorious with several sorts of writers, particularly orators and poets.

Example 1. Antony, in Shakespeare, thus addresses the dead body of Cæsar:

"O pardon me *thou* bleeding piece of earth!"

2. "The sword of Gaul," says Ossian, "*trembles* at his side, and *longs* to glitter in his hand."

3. "Ye *woods* and *wilds!* whose melancholy gloom
Accords with my soul's sadness, and draws forth
The voice of sorrow from my bursting heart." *Lady Randolph.*

291. Not only the inanimate parts of nature are personified, but the *qualities* and *members* of the body; even *abstract ideas* have sometimes conferred upon them the same important prerogative.

Illus. Thus, *hope* and *fear*, *love* and *hatred*, the *head*, the *hands*, the *feet*, *prosperity* and *adversity*, are often addressed as *independent living agents*.

Scholium. Human nature is a very compounded constitution, of which the several parts strongly influence one another. All mankind have remarked the singular power which affection and passion assume over our actions and our opinions. When we wish to believe any relation, or to perform any action, we seldom want reasons to persuade us that our opinions are well founded, and that our conduct is right. Affection, or interest, guide our notions and behaviour in the affairs of life; imagination and passion affect the sentiments that we entertain in matters of taste.

292. These faculties suggest a division of personification into two kinds; the first called *descriptive*, which is addressed chiefly to the *imagination:* the second, *passionate*, the object of which is to afford gratification to the *passions*.

Illus. 1. The conception that we entertain of the former of these kinds, amounts not to conviction that life and intelligence are really communicated to the personified object; but the conception we form of the latter seems to amount to conviction, at least for a short time.

2. When Thomson personifies the *seasons*, when Milton calls Shakespeare *fancy's* child, when the *ocean* is said to *smile*, and the *torrent* to *roar*, the most delicate imagination is not so far misled as to conclude that there is any thing real in these suppositions. They are figures conjured up entirely to gratify the imagination; and for that reason, examples of this sort are denominated *descriptive personifications;* because they are concordant with the tone of vivacity suggested by description. *(Illus. Art.* 35.)

3. But, in two of the instances already quoted, where the persons who personify are agitated by real passion, when Antony addresses the *dead body* of Cæsar; and Lady Randolph converses with the *woods* and *wilds;* the mind is affected in a much more sensible manner, and conceives for a moment that the deception is complete. As soon as passion subsides, and reflection recovers ascendancy, the delusion disappears, and the fiction is detected. But as this momentary gratification is highly agreeable, and even the reflection upon it is attended with pleasure, it is proper it should be distinguished from the former species of personification; and for this reason it has been called *passionate.*

293. As *descriptive personification* is derived from the disposition of the imagination to indulge in such views of nature and art, as tend most to gratify itself; so *life* and *motion* are capital sources of pleasure, in the contemplation of the objects with which we are surrounded.

Illus. 1. We feel a superior satisfaction in surveying the life of animals, than that of vegetables; and we receive more gratification in contemplating the life of vegetables, than those parts of nature which are commonly deemed inanimate. We receive even higher pleasure in beholding those animals of the same species, which are endowed with greater degrees of life and motion.

2. In a word, in all *views* of nature at *rest*, as in *landscapes;* and in all *views* of nature, in *motion;* the more numerous the objects are, either possessed of life, though not in motion, or possessd of life, and actually in motion, the greater, in proportion, is the power of the view to charm the imagination, and to captivate the spectator. It is this tendency of the imagination, to delight itself, not only with the contemplation of life, but of the best species of life, that of *intelligence*, which induces it to extend this property as widely as possible, because, by doing so, it extends the sphere of its own enjoyment. It is not content, accordingly, with the contemplation of all the real life and action which fall under its observation; it makes vigorous exertions to communicate these valuable qualities to many other objects to which Providence has denied them; to *vegetables*, to *ideas*, and even to *matter* totally inert.

294. The influence of this figure is so general and powerful as to constitute the very essence of compositions addressed to the imagination.

Illus. Strip the Seasons of Thomson, and the Georgics of Virgil, of this sprightly ornament, and you will reduce the two most beautiful didactic poems the world ever saw, to dry, uninteresting, uninstructive details of natural history. You cannot open either of these performances without meeting examples; I present the first that occurred to me.

Example 1. Thus the author of the Seasons:

"Now vivid stars shine out, in brightening files,
And boundless Æther glows, till the fair moon
Shows her broad visage in the crimson'd East;
Now stooping seems to kiss the passing cloud,
Now o'er the pure cerulean rides sublime.
Nature, great parent! whose directing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changing year,
How mighty, how majestic, are thy works!
With what a pleasant dread they swell the soul,
That sees astonish'd, and astonish'd sings!
You too, ye winds, that now begin to blow
With boist'rous sweep, I raise my voice to you.
Where are your stores, you viewless beings, say?
Where your aerial magazines reserved
Against the day of tempest perilous?"

2. The elegant Virgilian muse thus sings:

"Interea Dryadum sylvas, saltusque sequamur
Intactos, tua Mæcenas haud mollia jussa.
Te sine nil altum, mens inchoat; en age segnes
Rumpe moras; vocat ingenti clamore Citheron
Taygetique canes, domitrixque Epidaurus equorum,
Et vox assensu nemorum ingeminata remugit."

Analysis. Every reader will perceive how much these passages are enlivened by the personifications with which they abound. Every thing appears to live and act, and the imagination is charmed with a succession of vivid pictures.

Obs. Essays of all kinds admit the use of this figure, and even history on some occasions. It is frequently found in oratory, particularly that of the ancients; and it is sometimes discovered in moral discourses among the moderns.

295. *Passionate personification* results from the momentary conviction which the violence of passion is qualified to inspire,—that the *inanimate* objects which engage its attention are *endowed* with *sensibility* and *intelligence.*

Illus. The passions assume the most decisive influence over our opinions and actions, and, on some occasions, totally discompose and perplex the mind. They pull down reason and conscience from their throne, and usurp such an absolute dominion in the human frame, that the waves of the sea in a storm are not more completely subject to the turbulence of the winds.

2. If the passions are capable of producing these prodigious effects, we will not hesitate to allow them that sway which is requisite to account for passionate personification. But in whatever manner we shall account for the phenomenon, we cannot doubt of its reality; and that all passions, when excited to extremity, possess this power, is evident from the high relish which we entertain for such examples, when properly exhibited.

Example 1. *Fear* prompts this figure; Milton, speaking of the *eating* of the *forbidden* fruit, thus sings:

"Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and nature gave a second groan:
Sky lower'd, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept, at completing of the mortal sin."

Example 2. *Grief* in solitude naturally assumes a similar phraseology. Thus Almeria, in the Mourning Bride:

"O Earth! behold I kneel upon thy bosom.
Open thy bowels of compassion, take
Into thy womb the last and most forlorn
Of all thy race. Hear me, thou common parent,
I have no parent else. Be thou a mother,
And step between me and the curse of him
Who was, who was, but is no more a father."

3. *Attachment* utters itself in a similar manner. Shakespeare makes Richard II. vent his feelings to the following purpose, after landing in England from his expedition in Ireland:

"I weep for joy
To stand upon my kingdom once again;
Dear earth; I do salute thee with my hand,
Though rebels wound thee with their horses' hoofs;
As a long parted mother with her child
Plays fondly, with her tears, and smiles in meeting;
So weeping, smiling, greet I thee my earth."

4. *Hatred* takes hold of the same species of expression. Satan thus addresses the sun, in Paradise Lost:

"O thou! that, with surpassing glory crown'd,
Look'st from thy sole dominion, like the god
Of this new world, at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads; to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun! to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell. How glorious once above thy sphere!"

5. *Joy* also delights in personification. Adam's exultation at his first interview with Eve is beautifully painted by Milton. All nature is alive to share their happiness.

"- - - - To the nuptial bower
I led her, blushing like the morn; all heaven,
And happy constellations, on that hour
Shed their selectest influence; the earth
Gave signs of gratulation, and each hill;
Joyous the birds, fresh gales, and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub
Disporting! Till the amorous bird of night,
Sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star
On his hill-top, to light the bridal lamp."

6. The *impatience* of Adam to know his origin, is supposed to prompt the personification of all the objects he beheld, in order to procure information.

"- - - Thou Sun, said I, fair light!
And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay!
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
And ye that live, and move, fair creatures tell,
Tell, if you saw, how came I thus, how here?"

Scholium. These examples evince, that a *great part* of the most *expressive language of passion* is *personification*, and that it is peculiarly adapted to the more interesting scenes of life, where the passions are

wound up to the highest pitch. We should indeed naturally expect this consequence from the violent disorder of the mind in which it can be relished; for, without ascending to that derangement which infers lunacy and distraction, reason can scarcely offer a greater sacrifice to passion, than to admit the order of nature to be reversed, and inanimate existence to be endowed with life and intelligence.

Example 7. All the best *tragedies*, all the most passionate *scenes* in the most finished *epic poems*, bear ample testimony to its truth. We shall exhibit only another quotation from the most perfect play of the most complete painter of the language of passion. King Lear, in the height of his distress, personifies, and rails against the elements, which he considers as combined with his daughters to procure his destruction.

" I tax not you, ye elements, with unkindness,
I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you children;
You owe me no subscription; then let fall
Your horrible displeasure. Here I stand your brave;
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man!
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have, with two pernicious daughters, joined
Your high engendered battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this "

296. In treating of gender, (*Art.* 56. *Illus.* 3. *and* 4.) we took notice, that the English language possessed a singular advantage in marking *personifications*, by employing the *pronouns significant of sex.* In all other cases, inanimate objects must be denominated by the *neuter pronoun;* and, in other languages, no distinction of gender can take place in personifications, because the genders of their nouns are invariable. But a writer in English is left at liberty to adopt either the *male* or *female sex;* and it is of some consequence to attend to this circumstance, because improprieties are not uncommon.

Example. Milton has chosen unsuitable genders for the following personifications. Of Satan, he sings,

" - - - - - - - - His form
Had not lost all *her* original brightness,
Nor appear'd less than archangel ruin'd."

Analysis. If the personification of the form of Satan was admissible, it should certainly have been masculine. A female form, conjoined to the person of a male, seems to approach the ridiculous. (*See Anal. Ex. Art.* 297.)

297. A capital error in *personification*, is to deck the figure with *fantastic* and *trifling* circumstances. A practice of this sort dissolves the potent charm which enchants and deceives the reader, and either leaves him dissatisfied, or excites, perhaps, his risibility.

Example. Shakespeare will furnish an example of this sort.

" She shall be dignified with this high honour,
To bear my lady's train; lest the base earth
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss,

And of so great a favour growing proud,
Disdain to root the summer smelling flower,
And make rough winter everlastingly."

Analysis. Here the earth, which we usually call "our mother," (*Ex.* 2. *Art.* 295.) is degraded by being termed "base," (*Ex.* 3. *Art.* 295.) On the supposition that the earth is a *person*, it was competent to the poet to give *her* lips "to steal a kiss." But then to fancy the earth "growing proud" of this "favour," and disdaining "to root the summer smelling flower," is a ridicule of all figurative communication; since, as flowers would embellish her bosom, she prefers, to the pomp of dress, the pleasure of a kiss. But we may surmise that the poet personifies the earth as a *male*, since it is rather a masculine prerogative "to steal a kiss." Now, "so great a favour," in place of cooling *his* heart, was calculated to inflame it; therefore to imagine that the effect would be "to make rough winter everlastingly," marks something more than a defective taste in the poet.

298. Another error, frequent in descriptive *personifications*, consists in introducing them when the subject of discussion is *destitute of dignity*, and the reader is not prepared to relish them.

Example. One can scarcely peruse the following quotations with composure. Thomson thus personifies and connects the bodily appetites, and their gratifications.

"Then sated Hunger bids his brother Thirst
Produce the mighty bowl;
Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn
Mature and perfect, from his dark retreat
Of thirty years; and now his honest front
Flames in the light refulgent."

Example 2. Shakespeare, sometimes great in errors as in beauties, far outdoes Thomson. Speaking of Antony and Cleopatra:

"- - - - - - - The city cast
Its people out upon her; and Antony,
Inthron'd in the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air, which but for vacancy
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
And made a gap in nature."

299. So also, addressing the several parts of one's body, as if they were animated, is not congruous to the dignity of passion.

Example. For this reason, we must condemn the following passage, in Pope's very beautiful poem of Eloise* to Abelard:

"Dear fatal name! rest ever unrevealed,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence sealed.
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd idea lies:
Oh! write it not, my hand!—his name appears
Already written:—blot it out my tears!"

Analysis. Here are several different objects and parts of the body personified; and each of them is addressed or spoken to; let us consider with what propriety. The first is, the name of Abelard: "Dear

* Her country calls her Eloise, Pope *Eloisa*: I write the orthography of either.

fatal name! rest ever," &c. To this, no reasonable objection can be made. For, as the name of a person often stands for the person himself, and suggests the same ideas, it can bear this personification with sufficient dignity. Next, Eloise speaks to herself; and personifies her heart for this purpose: "Hide it, my heart, within that close," &c. As the heart is a dignified part of the human frame, and is often put for the mind or affections, this also may pass without blame. But, when from her heart she passes to her hand, and tells her hand not to write his name, this is forced and unnatural; a personified hand is low, and not in the style of true passion; and the figure becomes still worse, when, in the last place, she exhorts her tears to blot out what her hand had written. "Oh! write it not," &c. There is, in these two lines, an air of epigrammatic conceit, which native passion never suggests; and which is altogether unsuitable to the tenderness which breathes through the rest of that excellent poem.

300. In prose compositions, this figure requires to be used with still greater moderation and delicacy. The same liberty is not allowed to the imagination there, as in poetry. The same assistances cannot be obtained for raising passion to its proper height by the force of numbers, and the glow of style.

CHAPTER V.

ALLEGORY.

301. **ALLEGORY** is a species of writing, in which one thing is expressed, and another thing is understood. The analogy is intended to be so obvious, that the reader cannot miss the application, but he is left to draw the proper conclusion for his own use.

Illus. It is for this reason employed chiefly when a writer desires to communicate some important intelligence or advice, but is not permitted to deliver it in plain terms. It is also used for ornament, or to convey instruction so as to interest the imagination, and flatter the understanding, by giving the reader the appearance of instructing himself.

Example 1. A finer and more correct allegory is not to be found than the following, in which a vineyard is made to represent God's people, the Jews. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven,

and behold and visit this vine; and the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest so strong for thyself."*

2. Prior's Henry and Emma contains another beautiful example, in which *human life* is the *primary object*, and a *voyage* also the *allegorical* one. Any reader of discernment will easily trace the application. Emma addresses Henry:

"Did I but purpose to embark with thee
On the smooth surface of a summer's sea,
While gentle zephyrs play in prosp'rous gales,
And fortune's favour fills the swelling sails,
But would forsake the ship, and make the shore,
When the winds whistle, and the tempests roar?
No, Henry, no."

Scholium. From these examples it will appear, that allegory partakes of the *nature of metaphor* and *comparison* in respect of *resemblance*, though it is not altogether a resemblance of the same kind. In allegory no supposition is made, even for a moment, that the primary object is converted into the resembling one; as is done in the case of metaphor. Nor is the similitude between the primary and resembling object pointed out, as is performed when comparisons are employed. We are left to discover the application, and to make the proper inference. We are satisfied with discerning the general purpose of the allegory, without inquiring with minuteness into the interpretation of every particular circumstance, because circumstances are sometimes added, to adorn or complete the picture, without being intended to infer any application. Allegory differs from metaphor and simile in another point. Almost all the subjects of allegory are personified; and these consist sometimes of things inanimate, sometimes of abstract ideas. Few metaphors or similes admit personification.

302. Allegories may be divided into *three kinds; first*, those calculated for *ornament: secondly*, those designed for *instruction:* and *thirdly*, those intended both to *adorn* and *instruct*.

Example. Akenside employs a beautiful allegory, of the *ornamental* kind, to communicate a very familiar sentiment, that industry is necessary to acquire reputation in every line of life, though some men are more susceptible of culture than others.

". . . . . In vain,
Without fair Culture's kind parental aid,
Without enliv'ning suns and genial showers,
And shelter from the blast,—in vain we hope
The tender plant should raise its blooming head,
Or yield the harvest promis'd in its spring.
Nor yet will every soil with equal stores
Repay the tiller's labour, or attend
His will obsequious, whether to produce
The olive or the laurel."

Analysis. The chief merit of this example appears to be situated entirely in the expression.

303. The principal purpose of the second sort of allegories, is to *communicate instruction*.

* Psalm lxxx. 8—16.

Example. Quinctilian informs us, (lib. 8.) that the following reply of the Lacedæmonians, to Philip, king of Macedon, demanding compliance with some unreasonable requisition, and threatening hostilities in case of reluctance, was famous over all Greece. To the requisition of Philip, the Lacedæmonians returned this laconic answer, that "Dionysius was at Corinth."

Analysis. Philip knew well the history of Dionysius, and they left him to make the application. You will understand the import of this answer, when you are informed, that Dionysius was king of Syracuse, in Sicily; that he was banished from his country and crown, on account of his tyranny; and that, to procure subsistence, he had been obliged to submit to the humiliating employment of teaching a school in Corinth.

304. Besides these specimens of allegory, the ancients frequently employ a *moral species*, in order to recommend the principles and practice of virtue to the imagination, as well as to the understanding. The moderns sometimes follow them in this.

Illus. The address and knowledge of human nature displayed by this contrivance merit much commendation. The authors of ancient Greece, in all popular writings, both political and moral, discover much attachment to allegorical composition. The Socratic morals, of which Plato and Xenophon have left us so many specimens, abound with figurative allusions to the arts and occupations of life; and the greater part of the arguments they contain are deduced from analogy. All these specimens have much merit; but the writings which we have particularly in view, are, the beautiful *Allegory of Prodicus*, preserved by Xenophon, in his *Memorabilia Socratis*, and the pleasant picture of *human life* exhibited in the *Tabulature of Cebes.*

305. The Allegory of Prodicus proceeds upon the supposition that Hercules, before he undertook the career of life, retired to deliberate, whether he should take the route which conducted him to the mansions of Pleasure, or the path which led to the temple of Virtue.

Illus. In this critical situation, he is accosted by the goddesses of these temples, under the allegorical names of Minerva and Venus, who by turns persuade him to accompany them to their respective abodes. The persons, the dress, the manners of the goddesses, are picturesque and characteristic. Pleasure addresses him first, and hastens her pace to anticipate her rival. She invites him to partake all those enjoyments, which the most luxurious imagination can figure; and her rival listens with patience till she enumerates the gratifications she had to bestow. Virtue then accosts him in a modest, but decisive tone. She acquaints him, that no true fame, happiness, or gratification, is to be procured without great designs and good deeds; and that merit alone can secure the respect and rewards both of gods and men. Having explained her views, it was necessary she should expatiate on the vanity and futility of the enjoyments promised by Pleasure; and the author has admirably preserved the delicacy of the piece, and the modesty of Virtue, by making Pleasure interrupt the speech of her rival, and begin the attack. Pleasure attempts to infer, from the con-

fession of Virtue herself, the labour and fatigue which awaited her votaries. Virtue retorts with severity and justice. She triumphs over her rival, and prompts Hercules to undertake those great and meritorious achievements, which have rendered him the object of the admiration of all ages.

306. THE TABULATURE OF CEBES is constructed on a larger scale, and leads to allusions much more particular. It proceeds from the supposition, that some uncommon painting, alluding to the rarity of the knowledge and practice of virtue, of which few people understood the meaning, had been suspended in the temple of Saturn.

Illus. 1. The painting consisted of three compartments; one very large, comprehending the other two. The first compartment represented human life, into which all men enter; the other two compartments denoted the division of men into good and bad, the larger containing the bad, and the lesser the good. Error and ignorance appear at the gate of the first compartment, and of their cup all men drink some portion. Prejudices, predilections, and pleasures, next succeed in the garb of harlots, to seduce; and by them also all mankind are, more or less, misled. If they are followed too far, they conduct their votaries into the larger compartment, and consign them to Extravagance, Luxury, Avarice, or Flattery, who soon commit them to Sorrow, Remorse, Punishment, and Despair. After wandering for some time in the regions of Folly, their ruin is completed, unless, by accident, they encounter the great physician Repentance, who, if they are willing to submit to his directions, undertakes their cure, and finally conducts them to the small compartment, and the happy abodes of Wisdom.

2. But though some men reach the regions of Wisdom by this route, it is not the most patent path; that path, much less frequented than it ought to be, stretches up an eminence so steep that many travellers approach and survey it, but never attempt to surmount it. On this, Temperance and Moderation have occupied stations, and are ready to succour every candidate who needs their assistance. Fortitude and Activity soon join them, after ascending the eminence, and lead them to the abodes of Wisdom and Happines. Here they meet with Prosperity, Tranquility, Satisfaction, and Health, in the first place; and afterwards, with a great group of the most pleasant and happy companions, Integrity, Contentment, Friendship, Knowledge, Wealth, Dignity, Fame. They are, in a word, rendered superior to the greater part of those misfortunes, which so much disturb the happiness of mankind; and experience as much of the enjoyments of gods as is competent to mortal men.

Corol. Such views of human life are extremely captivating, particularly to young minds. They array Virtue in the most charming colours. They engage the imagination, and even the passions, on her side, and form the most powerful bulwark against the encroachment of Iniquity and Folly.

307. The *third sort* of allegories are calculated both for *ornament* and *instruction;* and of this species may be accounted the allegorical personifications which are often introduced into epic poetry, and sometimes into tragedy.

Example 1. No picture can more forcibly impress the imagination, no reasoning can so effectually excite the aversion of the heart, as the allegories of Sin and Death, in Paradise Lost, The poet paints, first Sin, and then Death, guarding the gates of Hell at the fall of Adam and Eve.

"Before the gates there sat,
On either side, a formidable shape.
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold
Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting; about her middle round
A cry of hell-hounds, never ceasing, bark'd
With wide Cerberean mouths, full loud, and rung
A hideous peal; yet when they list, would creep,
If aught disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there; yet there still bark and howl'd,
Within, unseen."

"The other shape,
If shape it might be called that shape had none,
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either; black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as Hell.
And shook a dreadful dart; what seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

Analysis. These allegorical figures are strongly marked, and the resemblance of their characters to the effects produced in life is to obvious to need any comment. The picture which Virgil exhibits of Fame, in the fourth Æneid, possesses similar merit, and is deduced from the same principles.*

Example 2. The subsequent picture of Slander, resembles that of Fame in Virgil, and is drawn with great vigour of imagination, and much allegorical merit. It is found in Shakespeare's Cymbeline.

"No, 'tis Slander,
Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile, whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world, kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons; nay, the secrets of the grave."

308. All the great poets have indulged in this species of figure. Homer *personifies prayers*, and converts them into *amiable beings*, under the feigned appellation of "*Jove's Daughters*," who are concerned for the happiness of mankind; and recommend attachment to the worship and service of the gods, as the best means of recovering or preserving that happiness.

* But Virgil's Fame is a *mixed allegorical composition*, which will stand the test of criticism in poetry; because, in writing, the allegory can easily be distinguished from the historical part. No person mistakes Virgil's *Fame* for a real being. Nor is the Tabulature of Cebes considered otherwise than a supposed picture. But in the History of Mary de Medicis, painted in some pictures, which (in 1817) I have seen, decorating the gallery of the Louvre, a perpetual jumble of real and allegorical personages, that produce a discordance of parts, and an obscurity upon the whole, is before the spectator's eyes. Real personages, Nereids and Tritons, fiction and reality, are mixed in the same group; a monstrous composition, only outdone by Louis XIV's enormous chariot, intended to represent that of the sun, surrounded with men and women, representing the four ages of the world, the celestial signs, the seasons, the hours, &c.

Scholia 1. Allegory is not very common, either for the purposes of ornament or instruction. An extraordinary share both of ingenuity and imagination is requisite to ensure success ; and the rising genius, of generous heart, and promising parts, who feels an inclination for allegorical writing, must guard against quaint ornaments, and the extending of allusions to too great minuteness. Let him always study brevity, and remember, that resemblances which have cost him much time to devise, are likely to cost the reader as much time to perceive ; the consequences of which need no illustration.

2. As allegories are in a great measure the work of imagination, they cannot be admitted into any species of writing much calculated to interest the passions. All the arguments against long metaphors, apply with double force against the allegories of the *second and third kinds*, which seldom can be formed with sufficient brevity for their admission. But the *first species* of allegories, which elevate and adorn a common sentiment, are of general use ; and in employing them, care should be taken that the phraseology be all figurative, that the attributes of the primary and the secondary subject be not confounded and interchanged.

Example 1. The most correct writers are sometimes faulty it this particular ; even Horace and Boileau are not unexceptionable. Horace, in the following example, applies two epithets to the subject of the allegory, which can be applicable only to the primary subject.

" Ferus et Cupido,
Semper ardantes acuens sagittas,
Cote cruenta."

Analysis. " Ardentes" is intelligible when applied to love, the primary subject, which, in a figurative sense, is often said to burn ; but it has no meaning when applied to an arrow, which is never supposed to be hot. " Cruenta," also, may be significant figuratively of the distress of unsuccessful love, but nobody ever heard of a bloody whetstone. No admirer of Horace would defend him, by alledging the epithet was proper, because the stone made sharp the arrow which drew the blood. Horace himself would have been ashamed of such a defence.

Example 2. Boileau has introduced a strange mixture of figurative and literal signification in the subsequent example :

" Pour moi sur cette mer, qu'ici bas nous courons
Je songe a me pouvoir d'esquif et d'avirons
A regler mes desirs, a prevenir l'orage,
Et sauver s'il se peut, ma raison du naufrage."

Analysis. These lines exhibit human life under the notion of a voyage at sea ; but instead of adhering to this view of the subject, the author changes the allegorical to the literal meaning, and, with abundance of inconsistency, speaks of preparing a boat and oars, to regulate his passions, and to save his reason from shipwreck. Reason can be shipwrecked figuratively only. The hypothesis, therefore, of a man's understanding taken up at sea, and saved from drowning in a storm, is somewhat more than ridiculous ; it is not a little absurd. (*See Analysis. Ex.* 3. *Art.* 269.)

CHAPTER VI.

APOSTROPHE.

309. APOSTROPHE is a turning off from the regular course of the subject to address some person or thing. Apostrophe, derived from the same source with personification, is the joint work of *imagination* and *passion*, but demands not generally so bold an exertion of those faculties as *personification.* (*Art.* 290.)

Illus. 1. It is commonly satisfied with addressing *living objects* that are *absent*, or *dead objects* with which we were familiar while they were in life. Some of its boldest efforts exhaust the essence of personification, and call up and address the inanimate objects of nature.

2. A well-chosen comparison, an extended metaphor, or allegory, will please both the imagination and the passions, when gently agitated. But let the passions rise to violence, and the gratifications of the imagination will yield them no satisfaction.

3. On this account, APOSTROPHES addressed to the *imagination*, are frequently extended to considerable *length*, and are not by being so the less agreeable: while those addressed to the *passions*, must all be *short*, to correspond to the desultory and distracted condition of the mind.

310. Our arrangement, then, of examples, will naturally fall into *two classes*; first, those more *lengthened* and *picturesque* apostrophes, in which the *pleasure of the imagination* has chiefly been consulted: and, secondly, those *expressive* of the *violence of passion.*

311. The bold and vigorous genius of Ossian delights in this figure, and affords many beautiful examples of the *first species.*

Example. His address to the Moon, is one of the most pleasant pictures of this sort, which, perhaps, any language can supply. It excites melancholy emotion, and charms the fancy, but it aims not to rouse strong passion.

"Daughter of heaven, fair art thou! the silence of thy face is pleasant: thou comest forth in loveliness; the stars attend thy blue steps in the east. The clouds rejoice in thy presence, O Moon! and brighten their dark-brown sides. Who is like thee in heaven, daughter of the night? The stars are ashamed in thy presence, and turn aside their sparkling eyes. Whither dost thou retire from thy course, when the darkness of thy countenance grows? Hast thou thy hall like Ossian? Dwellest thou in the shadow of grief? Have thy sisters fallen from heaven? and are they who rejoiced with thee at night no more?—Yes, they have fallen, fair light! and often dost thou retire to mourn.—But thou thyself shalt one night fail, and leave thy blue path in heaven. The stars will then lift their heads; they who in thy presence were astonished will rejoice."

Analysis. The solution of the change of the moon, founded on the opinion that she retired from her course to lament the loss of her sisters, adds sympathy to the picture, and captivates the heart from the resemblance between her melancholy situation and that of the poet. In this example, the objects are striking, and tender, and elevated, and excite correspondent emotions in the mind, but they cannot be said to agitate it with passion.

312. The apostrophes of the *second class* are the *offspring of deep agitation;* and the subsequent instances will illustrate the nature of their influence and operation.

Example. In the tragedy of Douglas, Lady Randolph thus accounts for the loss of her son :

"That very night in which my son was born,
My nurse, the only confident I had,
Set out with him to reach her sister's house;
But nurse nor infant have I ever seen,
Nor heard of Anna since that fatal hour.
My murder'd child! had thy fond mother feared
The loss of thee, she had loud fame defied,
Despised her father's rage, her father's grief,
And wander'd with thee through the scorning world."

Analysis. The apostrophe of the mother to the child, as soon as it was mentioned—the exaggerated supposition, that the unfortunate nurse had murdered it, and made her escape to save herself—the resolution of the mother to have run every risk, had she suspected any part of the misfortune that happened—are all the expressions of nature, and of genuine passion.

313. A principal error in the use of apostrophe, is to *deck the object addressed with affected ornaments.* It is by these ornaments that authors relinquish the expression of passion, and substitute in its stead the language of fancy.

Example. What opinion will the reader of taste form of the following quaint and laboured address of Cleopatra to the serpent, with which she was about to poison herself. It is taken from Dryden's *All for Love.*

"Welcome, thou kind deceiver,
Thou best of thieves, who, with an easy key,
Dost open life, and, unperceived by us,
Ev'n steal us from ourselves, discharging so
Death's dreadful office, better than himself,
Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,
That Death stands by, deceiv'd by his own image,
And thinks himself but sleep."

Analysis. Such conceits would scarcely be endured in the most cool descriptive poem. They cannot be supposed more improper than where they are. They resemble some of the obscure and forced allusions of allegorical writers, which the reader has difficulty to understand.

314. Another frequent error is, *to extend this figure to too great length.* The language of violent passion is always concise, and often abrupt. It passes suddenly from one object to another. It often glances at a thought, starts from it,

and leaves it unfinished. The succession of ideas is irregular, and connected by distant and uncommon relations.

Corol. On all these accounts, nothing is more unnatural than long speeches uttered by persons under the influence of strong passions. Yet this error occurs in several tragic poets of no inferior reputation.

315. Apostrophe frequently appeared in the oratory of *antiquity.* Demosthenes abounds in a figure so bold, and so suitable to the ardent tone of his own mind.

Illus. He often turns abruptly from the judges and his argument, and addresses himself to his antagonist, or the person accused. He seldom, however, personifies an inanimate object.

316. Cicero also affords many examples of every species of apostrophe.

Illus. 1. In his Oration for Ligarius, he addresses Tubero, the *prosecutor*, with vehemence, and paints in strong colours the criminality of his conduct, the partiality and animosity of his intentions. He personifies and addresses the sword of Tubero, and puts him in mind of being in arms against Cæsar at Pharsalia, if Ligarius, whom he accused of treason, had borne arms against Cæsar in Africa.*

2. In his speech against Catiline in the Senate, one of the most ardent and eloquent of all his orations, he bursts forth abruptly like a torrent, with an apostrophe to Catiline himself, who had the impudence to enter the senate-house, while the subject of his conspiracy was to be debated.

3. Never did an oration commence in a higher tone; and it needed all the genius and fire of one of the greatest orators to support a correspondent spirit in the sequel of the speech. Cicero, however, effected it. He was deeply interested in the suppression of a conspiracy, which his office of consul, his honour as an orator, and the safety of his country, demanded of him. He was in the prime of life, elated with the highest fame of civil honours and oratorical ability; all concurred to prompt this great effort of eloquence.

317. Apostrophe has seldom made its appearance in modern oratory, except with some *French preachers,* and some *enthusiasts* of that character among ourselves.

Illus. A French orator may address the cross of Christ, and implore the patronage and intercession of St. Louis with success, on account of the peculiarity of the national faith of his countrymen; but such eloquence could expect no better reception in this island than ridicule or contempt.

318. The British Houses of Parliament are at present the best theatres in the world for the display of eloquence; but many causes concur to render its appearances there less bold than it was among the ancients.

Illus. The abstract political or commercial nature of a great part of

* "Quid enim districtus ille tuus in acie Pharsalia gladius agebat? cujus latus ille mucro petebat? qui sensus erat armorum? quæ tua mens? oculi? manus? ardor animi? Quid cupiebas? quid optabas?"

the subjects on which it is employed; the ambition of modern orators to reduce legislation and common law to the cool principles of equity and justice; their superior attention, on that account, to facts and arguments, than to the phraseology and figures of pathetic eloquence; and finally, the insensibility, perhaps, of British constitutions, and their greater indifference, on that account, to the pleasures of imagination and passion; all co-operate to repress the more passionate exhibitions of oratory.

319. At Athens and Rome, the existence of the state sometimes depended on an oration; the most successful speaker was sure to gain every honour and advantage the public had to bestow.

Illus. He addressed large bodies of men, who had no established principles to direct their judgments, little knowledge of the theory of government, little impartiality, little discernment, little experience. Even the senate of Rome in later times, hardly merited a better character, and the assemblies of the people deserved a much worse one. They were factious, fickle, ignorant, partial, interested, and violent. They had no guides, but their appetites and passions, and the orators, to manage them, were obliged to impress these guides.

Corol. Apostrophe is, on the whole, a figure too passionate to gain much admittance into any species of composition, except poetry and oratory.

CHAPTER VII.

HYPERBOLE.

320. HYPERBOLE is also the offspring of the *influence of imagination* and *passion* over our *opinions*, and its purpose is to exalt our conceptions of an object beyond its natural bounds.

Illus. 1. Our passions magnify the qualities of objects to which they are attached, and diminish the qualities of those they disapprove or dislike. We exaggerate the good qualities of our friends, and underrate those of our enemies. We estimate higher a possession of our own, than a similar property of our neighbour. It is not insincerity that actuates us, and prompts us to impose on others, while we are conscious of the error. Our attachment to every thing connected with ourselves, dictates the partial judgments we form of it; the want of that attachment with respect to the things of our neighbour, or the opposite of it, aversion, with respect to the things of our enemy, make our opinions of them, in like manner, deviate from truth.

2. The purpose of *hyperbole*, is to *gratify these predilections and antipathies*, which it is impossible to eradicate from the minds of the most enlightened part of mankind, and which often extinguish, in the less cultivated part, every spark of justice and candour.*

* "Est autem in usu vulgo quoque, et inter ineruditos, et apud rusticos videlicet, quod natura est omnibus, augendi res vel minuendi cupiditas insita, nec quisquam vero contentus est." Quinctilian.

321. This figure is peculiarly graceful and pleasant, when we do not accurately perceive the limits of the subject we exaggerate; because we most easily believe a thing is very great, when we do not know exactly how great it is.

Illus. Hyperbole, in such a case, resembles the beautiful deception of the rising moon, when her orb appears uncommonly large, because seen indistinctly through all the mists and vapours of the horizon; or that other deception in the phenomena of vision, by which a small object, placed in a shade, passes for a great one situated at a distance.

322. All discourse and writing admit hyperbole. Though the offspring of the most violent passion, it is also consistent with composure of mind. It sometimes affords high enjoyment to the imagination, and indulges this faculty with the most magnificent exhibitions of nature and art. It shines, however, with most conspicuous lustre in the higher kinds of poetry and oratory. It appears chiefly in tragedy during the first transports of passion; and in all these cases, it may be employed to diminish, as well as to magnify.

Example 1. The *fear of an enemy augments* the conceptions of the size and prowess of their leader. Thus the scout in Ossian, seized with this propensity, delineates a dreadful picture of the enemy's chief.

"I saw their chief, tall as a rock of ice; his spear, the blasted fir; his shield, the rising moon; he sat on the shore, like a cloud of mist on the hill."

Example 2. *Admiration* of the happiness of successful love *exaggerates* conceptions of the lover. Shakespeare supposes the elevation of the lover's mind so great as to counteract the natural laws of gravity respecting his body.

"A lover may bestride the Gossamer,
That idles in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall—so light is vanity."

Example 3. *Horror of treason* and *opposition* prompts the most frightful notions of the traitor and oppressor. Cicero, on this feeling, exhibits a striking view of the enormities of Antony. "Quæ Charybdis tam vorax? Charybdim dico? Quæ si fuit, fuit animal unum. Oceanus, medius fidius, vix videtur tot res tam dissipatas, tam distantibus in locis positas, tam cito absorbere potuisse."

Example 4. The *irksome feeling* suggested by the sight of lean cattle tempts us to conclude, that the parts of their bodies have no bond of union but the skin. Virgil accordingly says of such animals, by way of diminution,

"Vix ossibus hærent."

Example 5. *Envy* also *diminishes its object;* and upon this principle Shakespeare introduces Cassius vilifying the behaviour of Cæsar in a fever.

"He had a fever when he was in Spain;
And when the fit was on him, I did mark
How he did shake. 'Tis true, this god did shake;
His coward lips did from their colour fly;
And that same eye whose bend did awe the world,

Did lose its lustre: I did hear him groan,
Aye, and that tongue of his, that bade the Romans
Mark him, and write his speeches in their books,
Alas! it cry'd—Give me some drink, Titinius,
As a sick girl."

Example 6. The *resentment* of Hamlet against the ignominious marriage of his mother, makes him *lessen the time she had remained a widow:*

"That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two.
——————Within a month,
A little month, or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
She married."

Example 7. *Fame* exaggerates the person, as well as the qualities, of a hero. "The Scythians, impressed with the fame of Alexander, were astonished when they found him a little man." *Kames.*

323. In the speeches of ancient generals to their armies, many beautiful instances are to be found of both kinds of this figure; exaggerations, on the one hand, of the number, force, courage, and hopes, of their own troops; and, on the other, diminutions of those of their enemies, in order to inspire that confidence of success which in these times was one of the surest means of victory.

Example. Longinus mentions a *diminutive* concerning a piece of ground, the property of some poor man: and Quinctilian another of Varro on the same subject. The former represents the property as "not larger than a Lacedæmonian letter," which consisted sometimes of *two* or *three* words. Varro figures it to be as small as a sling-stone; nay, he supposes it may even fall through the hole in the bottom of the sling.* Both these examples seem to belong to ridicule.

324. The errors frequent in the use of hyperbole, arise either from *overstraining* or introducing it on *unsuitable* occasions.

Example 1. Dryden, in his poem on the restoration of king Charles the Second, compliments that monarch at the expense of the sun himself:

"That star that at your birth shone out so bright,
It stained the duller sun's meridian light."

Example 2. Prior supposes the fire of a lady's eyes to outshine the flames of Rome, when lighted up by Nero; and the music of her lute, to surpass the fabulous miracles of Amphion, in building the city of Thebes. She would have rebuilt Rome faster than it could have been destroyed by the fires of Nero:

"To burning Rome, when frantic Nero played,
Viewing thy face, no more he had surveyed
The raging flames, but struck with strange surprise,
Confessed them less than those in Anna's eyes.
But had he heard thy lute, he soon had found

* "Fundum Varro vocat, quem possum mittere funda ni tamen excedat, quæ ejus funda patet."

His rage eluded, and his crime atoned;
Thine, like Amphion's hand, had waked the stone,
And from destruction called the rising town.
Malice to music had been forc'd to yield,
Nor could he burn so fast as thou couldst build."

Example 3. Shakespeare, in magnifying the warlike character of his heroes, sometimes exaggerates beyond all bounds of probability. The description of the river Severn hastening to the reeds, to hide his head from the sight of combatants so furious as Mortimer and Glendower, can scarcely be read with gravity.

"In single opposition, hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour,
In changing hardiment with great Glendower.
Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who, then affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp'd head in the hollow bank,
Blood-stained with these valiant combatants."

Example 4. Guarini, who perhaps excels all poets in studied extravagance, makes a shepherd thus address his mistress: "If all the sticks in the world were made into pens, the heavens into paper, and the sea into ink, they would not furnish materials sufficient to describe the least part of your perfections."

Example 5. Again, the same poet says, "If I had as many tongues, and as many words, as there are stars in the heavens, and grains of sand on the shore, my tongues would be tired, and my words would be exhausted, before I could do justice to your immense merit.*"

Example 6. An English poet converted the circumstances of the former of these extravagant compliments into a satire no less exaggerated:

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,
Were earth of parchment made;
Were every single stick a quill,
Each man a scribe by trade;
To write the tricks of half the sex,
Would drink that ocean dry.
Gallants, beware, look sharp, take care;
The blind eat many a fly."

325. Hyperboles should never be introduced till the *mind* of the reader is *prepared to relish them.* The introduction of such bold figures abruptly, puts the reader on his guard, and excites his reflection, which commonly dissipates the delusion, and defeats the purpose of the writer.

Example. No passion ever spoke the language which grief is made to assume in the following unnatural exaggeration. The figure and the tone of sentiment are totally discordant. King Richard II. deeply distressed on account of the calamities of the nation, thus addresses his cousin Aumerle, who was under much affliction from the same cause:

"Why weepest thou, my tender-hearted cousin?
We'll make foul weather with despised tears;

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* "Si tante lingue havesse, et tante voce,
Quant' ochil il cielo, e quante arene il mare.
Perderian tutte il suono, e la favella,
Nel dir a pien le vostre lodi immense." *Pastor Fido, Act V. Scene 2.*

Our sighs, and they shall lodge the corn,
And make a dearth in this revolting land."

326. HYPERBOLES are improper, when they may be *turned against the argument of the author who uses them.*

Illus. Isocrates, it is said, had employed many years in composing a panegyric on the Athenians, to assert their pretensions to precedency in the management of the affairs of Greece. It was delivered at the Olympic games, attended by citizens from all the states of that country; and in the beginning of it he introduced the subsequent exaggerated compliment to eloquence.

Example. "Eloquence can reverse in appearance the nature of things. It can impart to illustrious deeds the air of lowliness and insignificance, and exhibit inconsiderable, and even trifling actions, with the dignity of magnificence and heroism. It can bestow on antiquity the garb of novelty, and attire novelty with the respect and veneration due to antiquity."

Analysis. Longinus pertinently remarks, the author did not observe, that by this unseasonable encomium he was dispersing among his hearers an antidote against the operation of all the arguments he had to advance in behalf of his countrymen, the Athenians. Would the other Greek states be persuaded to do what they disliked, by an orator who had told them that his eloquence could reverse in appearance the nature of things? Might they not, in doing what he advised, perform the very opposite of what was right?

CHAPTER VIII.

CLIMAX, OR AMPLIFICATION.

327. CLIMAX, OR AMPLIFCATION, is nearly related to hyperbole, and differs from it chiefly in degree. The purpose of HYPERBOLE is to *exalt our conceptions beyond the truth;* of CLIMAX, to *elevate our ideas of the truth itself,* by a series of circumstances, ascending one above another in respect of importance, and all pointing toward the same object.

Illus. This figure, when properly introduced and displayed, affords a very sensible pleasure. It accords with our disposition to enlarge our conceptions of any object we contemplate; it affords a gratification similar to what we receive on ascending an eminence situated in the centre of a rich and varied landscape, where every step we proceed presents a grander and more extensive prospect.

Example. Shakespeare exhibits specimens of almost every poetical beauty, and is not deficient in instances of climax.

"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all that it inhabits, shall dissolve,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind."

328. The effect of this figure is peculiarly pleasant, when the gradation of the sentiment is denoted by members, which rise with an analogous swell in point of sound; and in this view the following examples from Cicero have much merit.

Example. Speaking of the power of language, in the first book De Oratore:

"Quæ vis alia potuit, aut dispersos homines unum in locum congregare; aut a fera agrestique vita ad hunc humanum, cultum, civilemque deducere; aut jam constitutis civitatibus, leges, judicia, jura describere."

329. Examples are sometimes found of an *anti-climax*, that is, of a gradation downward in the sentiment; and if the expression also present a correspondent descent in the sound, the sentence will possess uncommon merit.

Example. Horace affords a pertinent and curious instance in the following line:

"Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus."

Analysis. The *sinking* in the sentiment, from the *labour* of the mountain to the *birth* of the mouse, is admirably imitated by a *similar expression* of the *words*. The *verb*, the most dignified word both in meaning and sound, *is placed first*, contrary to the common arrangement. The *merit of the words*, in point of *sound*, *decreases* to the *last*, which is the most *diminutive* in the sentence, partly on account of its being a *monosyllable*, and almost a repetition of the last syllable of the preceding word, but chiefly on account of the contrast between the *insignificance* of the *word*, and the *dignity* of the *situation it occupies*.

330. Climax appears with grace in the calmer parts of oratory, in essays, and in all compositions which address the imagination, but attempt not much to interest the passions.

Illus. It is employed by the orator with advantage, in impressing the hearers with strong conceptions of a cause; in procuring favour to the argument he espouses; or in exciting disapprobation of that of his antagonist. It is also convenient in communicating sentiments that are striking or sublime, but it is too artificial to express any high degree of passion. The time and reflection necessary to arrange the sentiments according to their importance; the minute attention requisite to form the expression corresponding to the elevation of the thought, are all operations of a composed frame of mind, very different from that tumultuary state which is the attendant of violent passion.

331. It is, however, consistent with moderate agitation; and accordingly Longinus takes notice of the utility of it in managing a low degree of passion with address. In this case, however, the artificial arrangement of the words is relinquished. The swelling passion seizes the expressions most proper to denote it, and the phraseology is altogether artless. The best tragedies afford examples.

Example 1. Oronooko thus utters his recollection of past happiness:

"Can you raise the dead?
Pursue and overtake the wings of time?
And bring about again the hours, the days,
The years that made me happy?"

2. Almeria, in the Mourning Bride, expresses a similar sentiment in a similar manner:

"How hast thou charm'd
The wildness of the waves and rocks to this?
That thus relenting, they have given thee back
To earth, to light and life, to love and me."

3. Another example in the same tragedy exhibits a beautiful picture of the gradual influence of passion, in prompting the mind to believe what it wishes to be true.

"Let me not stir nor breathe, lest I dissolve
That tender lovely form of painted air,
So like Almeria. Ha! it sinks, it falls.
I'll catch it ere it goes, and grasp her shade:
'Tis life, 'tis warm, 'tis she, 'tis she herself."

Analysis. The apparition is first painted air, and has some resemblance to Almeria. It descends, and appears to be seizeable. It gets life, animal life, it is "she herself."

CHAPTER IX.

THE ANTITHESIS.

332. AS the design of a *climax* is to improve our conceptions of an object, by placing it at the head of a rising series; so the business of ANTITHESIS is to produce a similar effect, by placing one object in opposition to another of the same kind.

Illus. 1. Comparison is one of the capital operations which the understanding performs upon its ideas, and is a prelude to the arrangement of them in different classes, or the deducting from them important conclusions. When we communicate our thoughts, or hear, or read the thoughts of others, we receive pleasure, if similar ideas are exhibited in similar expression, and dissimilar ideas in contrasted expression; and in all cases of the latter kind, *antithesis* is the most natural and proper phraseology. Antithesis possesses all the advantages of climax or amplification, with which different things of the same kind impress the mind when placed in juxta-position; and it adds to these the pleasures derivable from unexpected difference and surprise. Periods constructed to denote by their arrangement these oppositions of the thought, are generally the most agreeable, as well as the most perspicuous. They possess the original light derived from the natural melody and propriety of the words; and they are further illuminated by the additional rays reflected from their contrasted members. *(Art. 212. Ex. and Anal.)*

2. The same rule must be observed in the use of antithesis which was found necessary in good comparisons resulting from contrast. They must take place between things of the same species. *Substantives, attributes, qualities, faculties of the same kind, must be set in opposition.* To constitute an antithesis between a man and a lion, virtue and hunger, a figure and a colour, would be to form a contrast where there was no opposition. But to contrast *one man* with *another, virtues* with *virtues, figures* with *figures,* is *pertinent* and *proper,* because in these cases there may be striking *opposition.*

Example 1. Lord Bolingbroke furnishes the following beautiful example: "If Cato may be censured, severely indeed, but justly, for abandoning the cause of liberty, which he would not, however, survive; what shall be say of those, who embrace it faintly, pursue it irresolutely, grow tired of it when they have much to hope, and give it up when they have nothing to fear?"

Analysis. The capital antithesis of this sentence is instituted between the *zeal* of Cato for *liberty,* and the *indifference* of some others of her patrons. Cato abandoned liberty, but he would not live without her; and even with all this merit he deserved censure. How different the conduct of other politicians, who pretend attachment to her, though they are never resolute to support her; who, instead of risking inconvenience or detriment, relax their efforts when they may hope for success, and relinquish them when they have no danger to apprehend. But, besides the leading antithesis, there are two subordinate ones in the latter member: "Grow tired of it when they have much to hope, and give it up when they have nothing to fear." The chief fault of this example is the neglect of opposition in the construction of the members which denote the contrast.

Example 2. This species of merit is discernable in other quotations from the same author. "He can bribe, but he cannot seduce; he can buy, but he cannot gain; he can lie, but he cannot deceive."

Example 3. Speaking of the materials of his Letters on Patriotism: "The anecdotes here related were true, and the reflections made on them were just, many years ago. The former would not have been related, if he who related them had not known them to be true; nor the latter have been made, if he who made them had not known them to be just; and if they were true and just then, they must be true and just now, and always."

333. ANTITHESIS makes the most brilliant appearance in the delineation of characters, particularly in history.

Illus. The historian, in the performance of this delicate part of his task, has a good opportunity of displaying his discernment and knowledge of human nature, and of distinguishing those nice shades by which virtues and vices run into one another. It is by such colours only that a character can be strongly painted, and antithesis is necessary to denote these distinctions.

Example. Pope's character of Atticus, supposed to be *Addison,* dictated by the keenest resentment against the improper part which the Essayist was then represented to have acted relative to the translation of Homer, is an example that cannot fail to attract attention.

"Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like a Turk, no brother near his throne;
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise,

Damn with faint praise, ‖ assent with civil leer,
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer,
Willing to wound, ‖ and—yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, ‖ and—hesitate dislike;
Alike resolved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, ‖ and—a suspicious friend;
Dreading e'en fools, ‖ by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging, ‖ that he ne'er obliged.
Who would not smile, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?"*

334. The beauty of *genuine antithesis* is so considerable, that we cannot wonder that many unsuccessful attempts have been made to acquire it. Lord Bolingbroke, though frequently happy in the use of it, is sometimes unfortunate.

Example 1. His Treatise on Patriotism contains the subsequent example:

"Eloquence that leads mankind by the ears, gives a nobler superiority than power, which every dunce may use; or than fraud, which every knave may employ, to lead men by the nose."

Analysis. The antithesis is instituted between leading men by the *ears*, which is the business of *eloquence*, and leading them by the *nose*, which is said to be the *office of power* or fraud. That eloquence should lead by the ears, is natural and intelligible, but where is the connection between fraud or power and the nose? To make out the figure, the author is obliged to have recourse to a vulgar and metaphorical sense of the words "leading by the nose," in which they denote leading in an ignominious manner, without conviction. Deny this resource, and the antithesis vanishes, or consists merely in words.

Example 2. Shakespeare, in the Merchant of Venice, furnishes another instance merely verbal: "A light wife doth make a heavy husband."

Analysis. There is in the thought not only no opposition, but on the contrary, a very close connection, that of cause and effect; because it is the folly of the wife which produces the dejection of the husband. Put words significant of these ideas instead of *light* and *heavy*, and the shadow of a figure vanishes—"A foolish wife afflicts a good husband."

335. A *climax* and *antithesis* are sometimes conjoined and carried on through several sentences.

Example. Thus Pope, in the Essay on Man:

"Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
MEN would be ANGELS, ‖ ANGELS would be gods;
Aspiring to be GODS, ‖ if ANGELS fell,
Aspiring to be ANGELS, ‖ MEN rebel."

Scholium. No figure has, perhaps, been so anxiously sought, and with so little success, as *antithesis*. It is much suited to impose on an unskilful reader. An author is very apt to employ it, who abounds not with solid and important matter. Many readers consider the surprize and brilliancy it presents as certain marks of genius; and they are inclined to believe that they have been amused and instructed, because they have been made to wonder. It is not easy in an enlightened age to shine in writing, by solidity and novelty of matter, and by simplici-

* Prologue to the Satire.

ty and elegance of manner. Much reading, much reflection, much practice, and much irksome criticism, must be employed before this important end can be attained. Authors who possess, perhaps, some genius, seem to wish to take a shorter path to fame; and to compensate for the slightness of their matter, they endeavour to dazzle by the smartness of their style; and if we may judge from the history of ancient literature, an attachment to ornaments of this sort, forms the first stage toward the corruption of taste.

CHAPTER X.

INTERROGATION, REPETITION, EXCLAMATION, IRONY, AND VISION.

336. **INTERROGATION.** The unfigured and literal use of interrogation is to ask a question; but when men are strongly moved, whatever they would affirm or deny, with great earnestness, they naturally put in the form of a question. The strongest confidence is thereby expressed of their own sentiment, by appealing to their hearers for the impossibility of the contrary.

Example. Thus Balaam expressed himself to Balak. "The Lord is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said it? and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken it? and shall he not make it good?"

337. Interrogation gives *life* and *spirit* to discourse.

Example. We have an illustration of this position in the animated, introductory speech of Cicero against Catiline. "How long will you, Catiline, abuse our patience? Do you not perceive that your designs are discovered?"

Analysis. He might have said, "You abuse our patience a long while. You must be sensible that your designs are discovered." But it is easy to perceive how much this latter mode of expression falls short of the force and vehemence of the former.

338. *Interrogation* may be used to *rouse* and *awaken* the hearers.

Example. Demosthenes, addressing himself to the Athenians, asks them: "Tell me, will you still go about, and ask one another *what news?* What can be more astonishing news than this, that the man of Macedon makes war upon the Athenians, and disposes of the affairs of Greece? Is Philip dead? No; but he is sick. What signifies it to you whether he be dead or alive? For, if any thing happens to this Philip, you will immediately raise up another."

Analysis. All this delivered without *interrogation*, had been faint and ineffectual; but the warmth and eagerness which this questioning method expresses, were calculated to awaken the Athenians to a sense of their supineness, and strike them with much greater force on the folly

of disunion immediately raising up *another* Philip. Again, their *simplicity* about the news of Philip's health is excellently exposed in the question, "Is he dead?" And the *hope of safety* expressed by the person to whom such a question was put by his neighbour, is most humorously satirized in the answer: "No; but he is sick."

339. *Interrogation* sometimes *commands* with great emphasis.

Example. Thus Dido, enjoining the departure of Æneas to be stopped:

"Non arma expedient, totaque ex urbe sequentur?
Deripientque rates alii, navalibus?"

340. *Interrogation* sometimes denotes *plaintive passion.*

Example. Thus Almeria, in the Mourning Bride:

"Alphonso! O Alphonso!
Thou too art quiet, long hast thou been at rest!
Both, father and son, are now no more.
Then why am I? O when shall I have rest?
Why do I live to say you are no more?
Is it of moment to the peace of heaven,
That I should be afflicted thus?"

341. Repetition seizes some emphatical word or phrase, and, to mark its importance, makes it recur frequently in the same sentence. It is significant of contrast and energy.

Example 1. It also marks passion, which wishes to dwell on the object by which it is excited. Virgil pathetically describes the grief of Orpheus for the loss of Eurydice, in the fourth Georgic:

"Te dulcis conjux, te, solo in littore secum,
Te, veniente die, te, decedente canebat."

So also Catullus, *de Passere mortuo Lesbiæ:*

"Passer mortuus est meæ Puellæ,
Passer deliciæ meæ puellæ.
Quem plus illa oculis suis amabat."

2. Pope, to heighten compassion for the fate of an unfortunate lady, reiterates the circumstance of her being deprived in her distress of the sympathy of her friends:

"By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed;
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,
By strangers honoured and by strangers mourned."

3. Dryden, in Alexander's Feast, supplies one of the most beautiful examples of this figure. He thus paints the sad reverse of fortune suffered by Darius:

"Deserted, at his greatest need,
By those his former bounty fed,
He sung Darius, great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate, and weltering in his blood."

342. Exclamations are the effect of strong emotions of the mind; such as *surprise, admiration, joy, grief,* and the like.

Illus. 1. *Exclamation*, like interrogation, is often prompted by sympathy. Sympathy is a very powerful and extensive principle in our nature, disposing us to enter into every feeling and passion, which we behold expressed by others. Hence a single person coming into company with strong marks, either of melancholy or joy, upon his countenance, will diffuse that passion in a moment through the whole circle. Hence, in a great crowd, in an assembly of people on some public and pressing emergency, passions are so easily caught, and so rapidly spread, by that powerful contagion which the animated looks, and cries, and gestures of a multitude never fail to impart.

2. I shall take the liberty to give one instance, which is known to all, and well calculated to illustrate the figure now under consideration. Turn with me, reader, turn thy mind back to the morning on which we heard it announced that her royal highness princess Charlotte of Saxe Cobourg was no more! Have you heard the news? said every Briton to his friend. News? what news? The princess Charlotte's dead! Dead! the princess Charlotte dead! did ye say? Yes! and her infant son too. Good God! both mother and son! Such was the language of our heart—such the species of *interrogation, repetition, exclamation*, which we used that doleful morn.

Scholium. Though *interrogations* may be introduced into close and earnest reasonings, *exclamations* only belong to strong emotions of mind. When judiciously employed, they agitate the hearer or the reader with similar passions; but it is extremely improper, and sometimes ridiculous, to use them on trivial occasions, and on mean and low subjects. The unexperienced writer often attempts to elevate his language, by the copious display of this figure; but it is seldom that he succeeds. He frequently renders his composition frigid to excess, or absolutely ludicrous, by calling on us to enter into his transports, when nothing is said or done to demand emotion.

343. VISION, another figure of speech, proper only in animated and warm compositions, is produced when, instead of relating something that is past, we use the present tense of the verb, and describe an action or event as actually passing before our eyes.

Example. Thus Cicero, in his fourth oration against Catiline, pictures to his mind the execution of the conspiracy: "I seem to myself to behold this city, the ornament of the earth, and the capital of all nations, suddenly involved in one conflagration. I see before me the slaughtered heaps of citizens, lying unburied in the midst of their ruined country. The furious countenance of Cethegus rises to my view, while with a savage joy, he is triumphing in your miseries."*

Scholium. This manner of description supposes a sort of enthusiasm, which carries the person who describes, in some measure, out of himself; and when well executed, must needs, by the force of sympathy, impress the reader or hearer very strongly. But in order to be successful, it requires an uncommonly warm imagination, and such a happy selection of circumstances, which shall make us think that we see before our eyes the scene that is described.

* "Videor enim mihi hanc urbem videre, lucem orbis terrarum atque arcem omnium gentium, subito uno incendio concidentem; cerno animo sepulta in patria miseros atque insepultos aspectus Cethegi, et furor, in vestra cœde bacchantis."

344. In *tragedy*, vision is the language of the most violent passion, which conjures up spectres, and approaches to insanity.

Example 1. The author of Phædra and Hyppolitus makes the former address the latter in the following strain:

"Then why this strain? Come, let us plunge together.
See, Hell sets wide its adamantine gates!
See, through the sable gates, the black Cocytus,
In smoky whirls rolls its fiery waves!
How huge Megara stalks!
Now, now, she drags me to the bar of Minos."

2. The horrors of the mind of Macbeth, after murdering the king and Banquo, are artfully and forcibly painted by the same figure:

"Methought I heard a voice
Cry, sleep no more! Macbeth, doth murder sleep."

3. He is still more violently distracted, and fancies he sees the ghost of the murdered king:

"Avaunt, and quit my sight!
Let the earth hide thee; thy bones are marrowless,
Thy blood is cold; thou hast no speculation
In those eyes which thou dost stare with.
Hence, horrible shadow; unreal mockery, hence."

345. IRONY. When we express ourselves in a manner *contrary to our thoughts*, not with a view to deceive, but to add force to our observations, we are then said to speak *ironically*.

Illus. Irony turns things into ridicule, in a peculiar manner; it consists in laughing at a man, under the disguise of appearing to praise or speak well of him.

Example. "By these methods, in a few weeks, there starts up many a writer, capable of managing the profoundest and most universal subjects. For what, though his head be empty, provided his commonplace book be full? And if you will bate him but the circumstances of method, and style, and grammar, and invention; allow him but the common privileges of transcribing from others, and digressing from himself, as often as he shall see occasion, he will desire no more ingredients towards *fitting up a treatise*, that shall make a very comely figure on a bookseller's shelf, there to be preserved neat and clean, for a long eternity, adorned with the heraldry of its title, fairly described on the label; never thumbed or greased by students, nor bound to everlasting chains of darkness in a library; but when the fulness of time is come, shall happily undergo the trial of purgatory, in order to ascend the sky."*

346. The subjects of irony, are vices and follies of all kinds; and this mode of exposing them is often more effectual than serious reasoning.

Illus. The gravest persons have not disdained to use this figure on proper occasions.

Example 1. Thus Elijah challenged the priests of Baal to prove the

* Tale of a Tub, Sect. 7.

truth of their deity. "Cry aloud, for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened."

2. To *reprove* a person for his *negligence* one might say, "You have taken great care indeed."

347. *Exclamations* and *irony* are sometimes united.

Example. Thus both are united in Cicero's oration for Balbus, where the orator derides his accuser, by saying, "O excellent interpreter of the law! master of antiquity! correcter and amender of our constitution!"

Scholium. Besides these, there are several other figures, partly grammatical and partly rhetorical; but as an account of them would be attended with little instruction, and less amusement, we shall refer those who may be led farther into this field, to the writings of the ancient critics, where they will find them explained. It only remains to point out the general principles which should guide our practice in the use of figures; and this is a matter of greater importance, as errors in this article are very common, and as young writers particularly are apt to entertain improper notions of such ornaments.

348. Remember that the first law of good writing, is to attend principally and closely to the matter; and that even the highest ornament is of much inferior consideration.

Illus. Good sense, dressed in plain language, will always gain approbation; though ornament may add to its impression, it can never supply its place. A figurative style, without important matter, may dazzle and captivate the untutored mind, and procure a temporary reputation; but reason and truth will, in time, triumph over prejudice and show, and consign to oblivion such ill-supported claims to fame. "Sunt qui neglecto rerum pondere," says Quinctilian, "et viribus sententiarum, si vel inania verba in figuras depravarint, summos se judicent artifices; ideoque non desinunt eas nectere; quas sine sententia sectari, tam est ridiculum, quam quærere habitum gestumque sine corpore."

349. Figures should never have the appearance of being anxiously sought, or of being forced into the service of a writer.

Illus. Affectation is the bane of beauty on all occasions, but particularly in composition. If attention to ornament cannot be concealed, it had better be relinquished. The appearance of art will injure reputation more with every reader of taste, than that reputation could be promoted by the most successful use of figures.

350. As figures should not be anxiously sought, so neither should they be lavishly employed. Ornaments of all sorts interfere with elegance, unless applied with taste. In literary compositions they may serve to display a richness of mind, they may impart a gaudy semblance, and may evidence a bold imagination, but they will never strike with the charms of genuine beauty. If, on the other hand, discernment be discovered in the use of them, if they are intro-

duced with moderation, and communicate real and permanent delight, they will be sure to gain approbation.

Illus. The ornaments of writing particularly, are of a nature so refined, that the richest imagination cannot always supply them; nor can the reader continue long to relish them. They are like delicacies of the palate, they sooner pall upon the taste than ordinary food. Figures too closely interspersed, interfere with their own impression; they exhaust the sensibility of the imagination by too frequent exertion; and they excite disgust by attempting too much to please.

351. An author should not attempt figures without being prompted by his imagination. He will readily discover, whether he has received from nature any considerable portion of this lively faculty, by the relish he entertains for works of genius, toward the composition of which she has liberally contributed.

Illus. 1. If oratory and poetry attract his attention, and communicate pleasure; if he feel inferior gratification in perusing productions of science, or in abstract inquiry, he has reason to conclude he is endued with some share of the mental power that has adorned the productions to which he is attached. If he feel this faculty so prevalent as to tinge insensibly the colour of his early compositions, he may hope, by proper culture, to attain eminence in the use of ornament.

2. But without such favourable presages, ornament ought not to be attempted. It is not admissible into many reputable species of composition. It is rejected in the greater part of scientific disquisitions. It is despised by some writers and readers; and in every kind of composition, except poetry, good sense, and important matter, conveyed in a simple and natural style, will be entitled to high praise. They will obtain higher praise than can be procured by attempting ornament without success.

Finally. Without a genius for figurative language, none should attempt it. Imagination is a power not to be acquired; it must be derived from nature. Its redundances we may prune, its deviations we may correct, its sphere we may enlarge: but the faculty itself we cannot create; and all efforts towards a metaphorical ornamented style, if we are destitute of the genius proper for it, will prove awkward and disgusting. Let us satisfy ourselves, however, by considering that, without this talent, or at least with a very small measure of it, we may both write and speak to advantage. Good sense, as has been said, clear ideas, perspicuity of language, and proper arrangement of words and thoughts, will always command attention. These are, indeed, the foundations of all solid merit both in speaking and writing. Many subjects require nothing more: and those which admit of ornament, admit it only as a secondary requisite. To study and to know our own genius well; to follow nature; to seek to improve, but not to force it; are directions which cannot be too often given to those who desire to excel in the liberal arts.

BOOK V.

ON THE NATURE OF TASTE AND THE SOURCES OF ITS PLEASURES.

CHAPTER I.

TASTE.

352. TASTE is that faculty or power of the human mind, which is always appealed to in disquisitions concerning the merit of discourse and writing; it is the power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and art.

Illus. 1. The word *taste*, under this metaphorical meaning, has borrowed its name from the feeling of that external sense by which we receive and distinguish the pleasures of food.

2. This faculty is common, in some degree, to all men; for the relish of beauty, of one kind or other, belongs to human nature generally. Whatever is orderly, proportioned, grand, harmonious, new or sprightly, pleases alike, but in different degrees, the philosopher and the peasant, the child and the savage. Regular bodies, pictures, and statues, develope in children the rudiments of taste; and savages, who pride themselves in their ornaments of dress, their war and their death songs, their harangues and their orators, evince that they possess, with the attributes of reason and speech, some discernment of beauty, and the principles of taste, deeply founded in the human mind.

353. TASTE is possessed in different degrees by different men. Its feeble glimmerings appear in some; in others, it rises to an acute discernment, and a lively enjoyment of the most refined beauties: the former have but a weak and confused impression of this power, as they relish only beauties of the coarsest kind; the latter have a certain natural and instinctive possession of this faculty, which may be improved by art, and which discovers itself in their powers and pleasures of taste.

Obs. This inequality is partly owing to the different frame of our natures, to nicer organs, and finer internal powers, with which one is

endowed beyond another; but still more to education, and a higher culture of those talents, which belong only to the ornamental part of life.

354. TASTE is an improveable faculty, and, refined by education, gives to civilized men an immense superiority above barbarians, and, in the same nation, to those who have studied the liberal arts, above the rude and untaught vulgar.

Obs. Thus, two classes of men are far removed from each other, in respect to the powers and pleasures of taste; and, for this difference, no other general cause can be assigned, than culture and education.

355. Exercise is the source of improvement in all our faculties, in our bodily, in our mental powers, and even in our external senses.

Illus. 1. TOUCH becomes more exquisite in men, whose employment leads them to examine the polish of bodies, than it is in others, whose trade engages no such nice exertions.

2. SIGHT, in discerning the minutest objects, acquires a surprising accuracy in microscopical observers, and those who are accustomed to engrave on precious stones.

3. CHEMISTS, by attending to different flavours and tastes of liquors, wonderfully improve the power of distinguishing them and tracing their composition.

356. Placing *internal taste*, therefore, on the footing of a simple sense, frequent exercise, and curious attention to its proper objects, must, in the first instance, greatly heighten its power.

Illus. 1. Thus, nothing is more improveable than that part of taste, which is called *an ear for music*. At first, the simplest and plainest compositions only are relished. Our pleasure is extended by use and practice, which teach us to relish finer melody, and by degrees enable us to enter into the intricate and compound pleasures of harmony.

2. So *an eye for the beauties of painting*, is never acquired all at once; nor by him who prefers the Saracen's head upon a sign-post, before the best tabulature of Raphael. It is gradually formed by being conversant among pictures, and studying the works of the best masters.

3. And the man who has cultivated the beauties of regularity, order, and proportion, in Architecture, will never prefer a rude Gothic tower, before the finest Grecian building.

357. Precisely in the same manner, with respect to the beauty of *composition* and *discourse*, attention to the most approved models, study of the best authors, comparisons of lower and higher degrees of the same beauties, operate towards the refinement of taste.

Illus. The sentiment that attends a reader's first acquaintance with works of genius, is obscure and confused. The several excellencies or blemishes of the performance which he peruses, cannot be pointed out, because he is at a loss on what to rest his judgment; but allow him

more experience of the subject, and his taste becomes more exact and enlightened: the character of the whole work, the beauties and defects of each part, are perceived, and his praise or blame is at length pronounced firmly, and without hesitation. Thus, in taste, considered as mere sensibility, exercise opens a great source of improvement.

358. But reason and good sense have so extensive an influence on all its operations and decisions, that a thorough good taste may well be considered as a power compounded of natural sensibility to beauty, and of improved understanding. (*Art.* 365.)

Illus. 1. The greater part of the productions of genius, are no other than imitations of nature; representations of the characters, actions, or manners of men. The pleasure we receive from such imitations, or representations, is founded on mere taste; but to judge whether they be properly executed, belongs to the understanding, which compares the copy with the original.

2. In reading such a poem as Paradise Lost, a great part of the pleasure we receive, arises from the plan or story being well conducted, and all the parts joined together with due connexion; from the characters, being suited to the subject, the sentiments to the characters, and the style to the sentiments.

3. We feel or enjoy by taste, as an *internal sense*, the pleasure which arises from a poem so conducted; but the discovery of this conduct in the poem, is owing to reason; and our pleasure will be the greater, the more that reason enables us to discover such propriety in the conduct.

4. Our *natural sense* of beauty yields us pleasure; but reason shews us why, and upon what grounds, we are pleased. Whenever, in works of taste, any resemblance to nature is aimed at, whenever there is any reference of parts to a whole, or of means to an end, as indeed there is in almost every writing and discourse, there the understanding must always have a great part to act.

359. A SECOND, and a very considerable source of the improvement of taste, arises from the application of reason and good sense, to works of composition, and productions of genius.

Illus. Spurious beauties, such as unnatural characters, forced sentiments, and affected style, may please for a little; but they please only, because we have not examined or attended to their opposition to nature and good sense. The illusion is dissipated, and these false beauties cease to please, as soon as we are shewn how nature might have been more justly imitated or represented, and how the writer might have managed his subject to greater advantage.

360. From these two sources then, first, *the frequent exercise of taste,* and next, *the application of good sense and reason to its objects,* TASTE, as a power of the mind, receives its improvement.

Obs. In its perfect state, it is undoubtedly the result both of nature and art. It supposes our natural sense of beauty to be refined by fre-

quent attention to the most beautiful objects, and at the same time to be guided and improved by the light of the understanding.

361. One material requisite to a just taste, besides a sound head, is a *good heart;* for moral beauties, in themselves superior to all others, exert an influence, either more nearly, or more remotely, on a great variety of other objects of taste.

Illus. The affections, characters, and actions of men, frequently afford the noblest subjects to genius. Without possessing the virtuous affections, no man, where those affections, characters, or actions, are concerned, can exhibit their just and touching description, nor have any thorough feeling of the beauty of that description. He whose heart is indelicate or hard, who has no admiration of what is truly noble or praise-worthy, nor the proper sympathetic sense of what is soft and tender, must have a very imperfect relish of the highest beauties of eloquence and poetry.

362. DELICACY and CORRECTNESS are the characters of taste, when brought to its most improved state.

Illus. 1. *Delicacy of taste* respects principally the perfection of that natural sensibility, on which taste is founded. It implies those finer organs or powers, which enable us to discover beauties that lie hid from a vulgar eye. A person of delicate taste, both feels strongly, and feels accurately. He sees distinctions and differences, where others see none; the most latent beauty does not escape him, and he is sensible of the smallest blemish.

2. *Correctness of taste* respects chiefly the improvement which that faculty receives through its connexion with the understanding. Counterfeit beauties never impose on a man of correct taste, because he carries in his mind that standard of good sense, which he employs in judging of every thing.

363. DELICACY *of taste* is judged of by marks similar to those which we use in judging of the delicacy of an external sense.

Illus. As the goodness of the palate is not tried by strong flavours, but by a mixture of ingredients, in which, notwithstanding the confusion, we remain sensible of each; in like manner, delicacy of internal taste appears, by a quick and lively sensibility to its finest, most compounded, or most latent objects.

364. CORRECTNESS *of taste* is judged of by the estimate which a man makes of the comparative merit of several beauties, which he meets with, in any work of genius.

Illus. When he refers these to their proper classes, assigns with propriety the principles, as far as they can be traced, whence their power of pleasing flows; and is pleased himself in that degree, in which he ought, and no more; we say that his taste is correct.

365. Delicacy, and correctness of taste, mutually imply each other. No taste can be exquisitely delicate, without being correct; nor thoroughly correct, without being deli-

cate. But still a predominancy of the one or the other quality in the mixture is often visible.

Illus. 1. The power of delicacy is chiefly seen in discerning the true merit of a work; the power of correctness, in rejecting false pretensions to merit. Delicacy leans more to feeling; correctness, more to reason and judgment. The former is more the gift of nature; the latter, more the product of culture and art

2. Among the ancient critics, Longinus possessed most delicacy; Aristotle, most correctness. Among the moderns, Addison is a high example of delicate taste; and had Dean Swift written on criticism, he would perhaps have afforded the example of a correct one. Campbell, Kames, Allison, and Dugald Stewart, are examples of correct and delicate taste.

366. THE DIVERSITY OF TASTES, which prevails among mankind, does not in every case infer a corruption of taste, or oblige us to seek for some standard, in order to determine who are in the right.

Illus. The tastes of men may differ very considerably as to their object, and yet none of them be wrong. One man relishes poetry, while another takes pleasure in nothing but history. One prefers comedy; another tragedy. One admires the simple, another, the ornamented style. The young are amused with gay and sprightly compositions; the elderly are more entertained with those of a graver cast Some nations delight in bold pictures of manners, and strong representations of passions; others incline to a more correct and regular elegance, both in description and sentiment. Though all differ, yet all pitch upon some beauty which peculiarly suits their turn of mind; and therefore no one has a title to condemn his neighbour.

367. In questions of mere reason, there is but *one conclusion* that can be true; and there is *some foundation* for the preference of one man's taste to that of another.

Illus. Truth, which is the object of reason, is *one;* beauty, which is the object of taste, is *manifold.* Taste, therefore, admits of latitude and diversity of objects, in sufficient consistency with its goodness or justness.

368. This admissible diversity of tastes, can only have place where the objects of taste are different. When one condemns as ugly what another admires as beautiful, there is no longer diversity, but direct opposition of taste. One must be right, and the other wrong.

Illus. 1. One man prefers Virgil to Homer; another, admires Homer more than Virgil; yet there is no reason to say that their tastes are contradictory. The one is more struck with the elegance and tenderness of Virgil; the other with the simplicity and fire of Homer. As long as neither of them denies that both Homer and Virgil have great beauties, their difference falls within the compass of that diversity of tastes, which is both natural and allowable. *(Art.* 366.)

2. But if a third man should assert that Homer has no beauties whatever, and that Virgil is devoid of elegance and tenderness,—that

he holds the one to be a dull, spiritless writer, and the other to be a mere copiest, that in distinction to the Æneid he would as soon peruse Robinson Crusoe, or Jack the Giant Killer to the Iliad; both the other men would pronounce him void of all taste, or exclaim that his taste was corrupted in a miserable degree.

3. Or if either of the two men who disputed about the pre-eminence of Virgil or of Homer, should evince the same disposition as the third man shewed; his antagonist would appeal to whatever he thought the standard of taste to shew him that he was in the wrong.

369. A STANDARD properly signifies that, which, being fixed by convention, is of such undoubted authority as to be the test of other things of the same kind.

Illus. 1. Thus a standard weight or measure is that which is appointed by law to regulate all other weights and measures.

2. Thus, also, the Court is said to be the standard of good breeding; and the Scripture, of theological truth.

370. In all cases where an imitation is intended of some object that exists in nature, as in representing human characters and actions, *nature is the standard of taste*, because conformity to it affords a full and distinct criterion of what is truly beautiful.

Obs. Reason hath in such cases full scope for exerting its authority, for approving or condemning; by comparing the copy with the original. But there are innumerable cases in which this rule cannot be applied; and conformity with nature is an expression frequently used, without any distinct or determinate meaning. The standard of taste must, therefore, be something which is clear and precise, without any imperfection, irregularity, or disorder.

371. The *general sentiments of mankind* must be considered the *standard* to which the ultimate appeal must ever lie, in all works of *taste.*

Illus. If any one should maintain that sugar was bitter, and tobacco sweet, no reasonings on his part could avail to prove this position; mankind would infallibly hold the taste of such a person to be diseased, merely because it differed diametrically from the taste of the species to which he belonged. In like manner, with regard to the objects of sentiment or internal taste, the common feelings of men carry the same authority, and become an universal standard to regulate the taste of every individual.

372. There is nothing but the taste, as far as it can be gathered, of human nature, of sufficient authority to be the standard of the various and opposite tastes of men.

Illus. That which men concur the most in admiring must be reckoned beautiful. His taste must be esteemed just and true which coincides with the general sentiments of men. He who, in any dispute, appeals to the common sense of mankind as the ultimate rule or standard by which he will be judged, evinces a conviction of a common standard to which his taste is right or good if conformable, while that of his opponent must be wrong or bad, if disconformable. The taste of a whole

people, *guided by reason and virtue*, must generally be exquisite and just, their internal senses unerring and sure. He who allows submission to be due to the determinations of all mankind, acknowledges a perfect standard for the taste of all others.

373. But besides the approbation of the majority, there are *principles of reason and sound judgment* which can be applied to matters of taste, as well as to the subjects of science and philosophy.

Illus. He who admires or censures any work of genius, is always ready, if his taste be improved, to assign some reasons for his decision. He appeals to principles, and points out the grounds on which he proceeds. Taste is, therefore, a sort of compound power, in which the light of the understanding always mingles, more or less, with the feelings of sentiment.

374. The ultimate conclusions to which our reasonings lead, in judging concerning works of taste, refer at last to *sense* and *perception.*

Illus. 1. Just reasonings concerning propriety of conduct in a tragedy, or an epic poem, will correct the caprice of unenlightened taste, and establish principles for judging of what deserves praise. These reasonings, in the last resort, appeal always to feeling. Their foundation is deeply laid in whatever has been found from experience to please mankind universally.

2. Upon this ground, we prefer a simple and natural, to an artificial style; a regular and well-connected story, to loose and scattered narratives; a catastrophe which is tender and pathetic, to one which leaves us unmoved.

Corol. It is from consulting our own imagination and heart, and from attending to the feelings of others, that any principles are formed which acquire authority in matters of taste.

375. When we refer to the concurring sentiments of men as to the ultimate test of what is to be accounted beautiful in the arts, this is always to be understood of men placed in such situations as are favourable to the proper exertions of taste.

Illus. The sentiments of mankind in polished and flourishing nations, where arts are cultivated, and manners refined, where works of genius are subject to free discussion, and taste is improved by science and philosophy,—become the principles of authority which must necessarily be decisive of every controversy that can arise upon matters of taste.

376. We conclude, therefore, that taste is not an arbitrary principle, subject to the fancy of every individual, and admitting no criterion by which to determine whether it be true or false. Its foundation is the same in all human minds. It is built upon sentiments and perceptions which belong to our nature; and which in general operate with the same uniformity as our other intellectual principles.

Obs. When these sentiments are perverted by ignorance and prejudice, they are capable of being rectified by reason. Their sound and natural state is ultimately determined, by comparing them with the general taste of mankind.

377. In every composition, what interests the heart pleases all ages and all nations. There is a certain string to which, when properly struck, the human heart is so made as to answer.

Illus. 1. Hence, the universal testimony which the most improved nations of the earth have conspired, throughout a long succession of ages, to give to some few works of genius; such as the Iliad of Homer, and the Æneid of Virgil.

2. Hence, the authority which such works have acquired as standards, in some degree, of poetical composition; since from them we are enabled to collect what the sense of mankind is, concerning those beauties which give them the highest pleasure, and which, therefore, poetry ought to exhibit.

378. Uniformity of taste and sentiment resulting from our conviction of a common standard, leads to two important final causes; the one respecting our duty, the other, our pastime or amusement.

Obs. Barely to mention the first, shall be sufficient, because it does not properly belong to the present undertaking. Unhappy it would be for us did not uniformity prevail in morals: that our actions should uniformly be directed to what is good and against what is ill, is the greatest blessing of society; and in order to uniformity in action, uniformity of opinion and sentiment is indispensable.

379. With respect to pastime in general, and the fine arts in particular, the following illustrations make the final cause of uniformity abundantly obvious.

Illus. 1. Uniformity of taste gives opportunity for sumptuous and elegant buildings, for fine gardens, and extensive establishments which please generally.

2. The reason is obvious: without uniformity of taste, there could not be any suitable reward, either of profit or honour, to encourage men of genius to labour in such works, and to advance them to perfection.

3. The same uniformity of taste is equally necessary to perfect the arts of music, sculpture, and painting, and to support the expense which they require after they are brought to perfection.

4. Nature is, in every particular, consistent with herself: we are framed by nature to have a high relish for the fine arts, which are a great source of happiness, and friendly in a high degree to virtue: we are, at the same time, framed with uniformity of taste to furnish proper objects for that high relish; and if uniformity did not prevail, the fine arts would never have made any figure.

380. Another final cause no less obvious, is the separation of men into different classes, by birth, office, or occupation. How much soever this separation might tend to relax the

connexion that ought to subsist among the members of the same state, its effects are prevented by the access of all ranks of people to public spectacles and amusements. These assemblages of people of one country are best enjoyed in company. In this common fellowship every one partakes of the same pleasures. Such meetings are, therefore, no slight support to the social affections* and to uniformity of taste.

CHAPTER II.

CRITICISM.

381. TASTE, *criticism*, and *genius*, are words currently employed, without distinct ideas annexed to them.

Definition. True criticism is the application of taste and of good sense to the several fine arts. The object which it proposes is, to distinguish what is beautiful and what is faulty in every performance; from particular instances to ascend to general principles; and so to form rules or conclusions concerning the several kinds of beauty in works of genius.

Illus. The rules of criticism are not formed by any induction, *a priori*, as it is called; that is, they are not formed by a train of abstract reasoning, independent of facts and observations. Criticism is an art founded wholly on experience; on the observations of such beauties as have come nearest to the standard which we before established; that is, of such beauties as have been found to please mankind most generally. (*Art.* 371.)

2. For example; Aristotle's rules concerning the unity of action in dramatic and epic composition, were not first discovered by logical reasoning, and then applied to poetry; but they were rules drawn from the practice of Homer and Sophocles: they were founded upon observing the superior pleasure which mankind received from the relation of an action which was one and entire, beyond what they received from the relation of scattered and unconnected facts.

3. Such observations taking their rise at first from feeling and experience, were found, on examination, to be so consonant to reason, and to the principles of human nature, as to pass into established rules, and to be conveniently applied for judging of the excellency of any performance. This is the most natural account of the origin of criticism.

382. A masterly genius, it is true, will of himself, untaught, compose in such a manner as shall be agreeable to

* On works of taste, the student may now consult *Dr. Gerrard's* Essay on Taste—*D'Alembert's* Reflections on the use and abuse of Philosophy in matters which relate to taste—Reflections Critiques sur la Poesie et sur la Peinture—*Kames'* Elements of Criticism—*Hume's* Essay on the Standard of Taste—Introduction to the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful—*Blair's* Lectures, and *Allison* on Taste.

the most material rules of criticism; for as these rules are founded in nature, nature will often suggest them in practice.

Illus. It is more than probable that Homer was acquainted with no systems of the art of poetry. Guided by genius alone, he composed in verse a regular story, which all posterity has admired. But this is no argument against the usefulness of criticism as an art. For as no human genius is perfect, there is no writer but may receive assistance from critical observations upon the beauties and faults of those who have gone before him. No observations or rules can indeed supply the defect of genius, or inspire it where it is wanting. But they may often direct it into its proper channel; they may correct its extravagances, and point out to it the most just and proper imitation of nature. Critical rules are designed chiefly to shew the faults that ought to be avoided. To nature we must be indebted for the production of eminent beauties. (*See Corol.* 1. *p.* 59.)

383. From what has been said, we are enabled to form a judgment concerning those complaints which it has long been fashionable for petty authors to make against critics and criticism.

Illus. 1. Critics have been represented as the great abridgers of the native liberty of genius; as the imposers of unnatural shackles and bonds upon writers, from whose cruel persecution they must fly to the public, and implore its protection. Such supplicatory prefaces are not calculated to give very favourable ideas of the genius of the author. For every good writer will be pleased to have his work examined by the principles of sound understanding and true taste.

2. The declamations against criticism commonly proceed upon this supposition, that critics are such as judge by rule, not by feeling. This is so far from being true, that they who judge after this manner are pedants, not critics. For all the rules of genuine criticism will be found to be ultimately founded on feeling; and taste and feeling are necessary to guide us in the application of these rules to every particular instance.

3. As there is nothing in which all sorts of persons more readily affect to be judges, than in works of taste, there is no doubt that the number of incompetent critics will always be great. But this affords no more foundation for a general invective against criticism, than the number of bad philosophers or reasoners affords against sound philosophy and logic.

384. An objection more plausible may be formed against criticism, from the applause that some performances have received from the public, which, when accurately considered, are found to contradict the rules established by criticism.

Illus. Now, according to the principles laid down in the last chapter, the public is the supreme judge to whom the last appeal must be made in every work of taste; as the standard of taste is founded on the sentiments that are natural and common to all men. But with respect to this, we are to observe, that the sense of the public is often too hastily judged of. The genuine public taste does not always appear

in the first applause given upon the publication of any new work. There are both the great vulgar, and the small vulgar, who are apt to be catched and dazzled by very superficial beauties, the admiration of which in a little time passes away: and sometimes a writer may acquire great temporary reputation, merely by his compliance with the passions or prejudices, with the party spirit or superstitious notions, that may chance to rule for a time almost a whole nation. In such cases, though the public may seem to praise, true criticism may with reason condemn; and it will in progress of time gain the ascendant: for the judgment of true criticism, and the voice of the public, when once become unprejudiced and dispassionate, will ultimately coincide.

385. There are some works that contain gross transgressions of the laws of criticism, which, nevertheless, have acquired a general, and even a lasting admiration.

Illus. 1. Such are the plays of Shakspeare, which, considered as dramatic poems, are irregular in the highest degree. But then they have gained the public admiration, not by their being irregular, not by their transgression of the rules of art, but in spite of such transgressions. They possess other beauties which are conformable to just rules; and the force of these beauties has been so great as to overpower all censure, and to give the public a degree of satisfaction superior to the disgust arising from their blemishes.

2. Shakspeare pleases, not by his bringing the transactions of many years into one play; not by his grotesque mixtures of tragedy and comedy in one piece, nor by the strained thoughts, and affected witticisms, which he sometimes employs. These we consider as blemishes, and impute them to the grossness of the age in which he lived. But he pleases by his animated and masterly representations of characters, by the liveliness of his descriptions, the force of his sentiments, and his posssessing, beyond all writers, the natural language of passion: beauties which true criticism no less teaches us to place in the highest rank, than nature teaches us to feel.

CHAPTER III.

OF GENIUS.

386. TASTE and GENIUS are two words frequently joined together; and therefore, by inaccurate thinkers, confounded. *Taste* consists in the *power* of *judging; genius,* in the *power* of *executing.*

Illus. 1. One may have a considerable degree of taste in poetry, eloquence, or any of the fine arts, who has little or hardly any genius for composition or execution in any of these arts; but genius cannot be found without including taste also. Genius, therefore, deserves to be considered as a higher power of the mind than taste.

2. Genius always imports something inventive or creative; which does not rest in mere sensibility to beauty where it is perceived, but

which can, moreover, produce new beauties, and exhibit them in such a manner as strongly to impress the minds of others. Refined taste forms a good critic; but genius is farther necessary to form the poet, or the orator.

3. Genius is a word, which, in common acceptation, extends much farther than to the objects of taste. It is used to signify that *talent* or *aptitude* which we receive from nature, for excelling in any one thing whatever. Thus we speak of a *genius for mathematics*, as well as a *genius for poetry;* of a *genius for war*, for *politics*, or for any mechanical employment.

387. This talent or aptitude for excelling in some one particular, is what we receive from nature. By art and study, no doubt, it may be greatly improved; but by them alone it cannot be acquired.

Illus. 1. As genius is a higher faculty than taste, it is ever, according to the usual frugality of nature, more limited in the sphere of its operations. It is not uncommon to meet with persons who have an excellent taste in several of the polite arts, such as music, poetry, painting, and eloquence, all together: but, to find one who is an excellent performer in all these arts, is much more rare; or rather, indeed, such an one is not to be looked for.

2. A sort of universal genius, or one who is equally and indifferently turned towards several different professions and arts, is not likely to excel in any. Although there may be some few exceptions, yet in general it holds, that when the bent of the mind is exclusively directed towards some one object, there is the fairest prospect of eminence in that, whatever it be. The rays must converge to a point, in order to glow intensely. This remark is the more necessary, on account of its great importance to young people, in leading them to examine with care, and to pursue with ardour, the current and pointing of nature towards those exertions of genius in which they are most likely to excel.

388. A genius for any of the fine arts, always supposes *taste;* it is clear, that the improvement of taste will serve both to forward and to correct the operations of genius.

Illus. 1. In proportion as the taste of a poet, or orator, becomes more refined with respect to the beauties of composition, it will certainly assist him to produce the more finished beauties in his work. Genius, however, in a poet, or orator, may sometimes exist in a higher degree than taste; that is, genius may be bold and strong, when taste is neither very delicate, nor very correct.

2. This is often the case in the infancy of arts: a period when genius frequently exerts itself with great vigour, and executes with much warmth; while taste, which requires experience, and improves by slower degrees, hath not yet attained to its full growth.

3. Homer and Shakespeare are proofs of what is here asserted. In the admirable writings of those two great poets are found instances of rudeness and indelicacy, which the more refined taste of later writers, of far inferior genius, would have taught them to avoid.

4. As all human perfection is limited, this may very probably be the law of our nature, that it is not given to one man to execute with vig-

our and fire, and, at the same time, to attend to all the lesser and more refined graces that belong to the exact perfection of his work: while, on the other hand, a thorough taste for those inferior graces is, for the most part, accompanied with a diminution of sublimity and force.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOURCES OF THE PLEASURES OF TASTE.

389. HAVING now explained the nature of taste, the nature and importance of criticism, and the distinction between taste and genius; we are now to consider THE SOURCES OF THE PLEASURES OF TASTE.

Obs. Here opens a very extensive field; no less than *all the pleasures of the imagination*, as they are commonly called, whether afforded us by natural objects, or by the imitations and descriptions of them. But it is not necessary to the purpose of this Grammar, that all these should be examined fully; the pleasure which we receive from discourse, or writing, being the main object of them, so far as rhetoric is concerned. All that is proposed, is to give some openings into the pleasures of taste in general; and to insist more particularly upon sublimity and beauty.

Illus. 1. It is difficult to make a full enumeration of the several objects that give pleasure to taste; it is more difficult to define all those which have been discovered, and to reduce them under proper classes; and, when we would go farther, and investigate the efficient causes of the pleasure which we receive from such objects, here, above all, we find ourselves at a loss.

2. For instance; we all learn by experience, that certain figures of bodies appear to us more beautiful than others. On inquiring farther, we find that the regularity of some figures, and the graceful variety of others, are the foundation of the beauty which we discern in them; but when we attempt to go a step beyond this, and inquire what is the cause of regularity and variety producing in our minds the sensation of beauty, any reason we can assign is extremely imperfect. These first principles of internal sensation, nature seems to have covered with an impenetrable veil.

3. Although the efficient cause be obscure, the final cause of those sensations lies in many cases more open: and, in entering on this subject, we cannot avoid taking notice of the strong impression which the powers of *taste* and *imagination* are calculated to give us of the benignity of our Creator.

4. By endowing us with such powers, he hath widely enlarged the sphere of the pleasures of human life; and those too of a kind the most pure and innocent. The necessary purposes of life might have been abundantly answered, though our senses of seeing and hearing had only served to distinguish external objects, without conveying to us any of those refined and delicate sensations of beauty and grandeur, with which we are now so much delighted.

5. This additional embellishment and glory, which, for promoting our

entertainment, the Author of Nature hath poured forth upon his works, is one striking testimony, among many others, of His benevolence and goodness.

6. This thought, which Mr. Addison first started, Dr. Akenside, in his poem on the Pleasures of the Imagination, has happily pursued.

> - - - - - - Not content
> With every food of life to nourish man,
> By kind allusions of the wondering sense,
> Thou mak'st all nature, beauty to his eye,
> Or music to his ear. - - -

390. First, then, we begin with considering the pleasure which arises from *sublimity* or *grandeur*.

Illus. It is not easy to describe, in words, the precise impression which great and sublime objects make upon us when we behold them, but every one has a conception of it. It produces a sort of internal elevation and expansion; it raises the mind much above its ordinary state; and fills it with a degree of wonder and astonishment, which it cannot well express. The emotion is certainly delightful; but it is altogether of the serious kind; a degree of awfulness and solemnity, even approaching to severity, commonly attends it when at its height; very distinguishable from the more gay and brisk emotion raised by beautiful objects.

391. The simplest form of *external grandeur* appears in the vast and boundless prospects presented to us by nature; such as wide extended plains, to which the eye can see no limits; the firmament of heaven; or the boundless expanse of the ocean. All vastness produces the impression of sublimity.

Illus. It is to be remarked, however, that space, extended in length, makes not so strong an impression as height or depth. Though a boundless plain be a grand object, yet a high mountain, to which we look up, or an awful precipice or tower, whence we look down on the objects which lie below, is still more so.

2. The excessive grandeur of the firmament arises from its height, joined to its boundless extent; and that of the ocean, not from its extent alone, but from the perpetual motion and irresistible force of that mass of waters. Wherever space is concerned, it is clear, that amplitude or greatness of extent, in one dimension or other, is necessary to grandeur. Remove all bounds from any object, and you presently render it sublime.

Corol. Hence, infinite space, endless numbers, and eternal duration, fill the mind with great ideas.

392. But vastness, or amplitude of extent, is not alone the foundation of all sublimity; because many objects appear sublime, which have no relation to space at all.

Illus. Such, for instance, is great loudness of sound. The burst of thunder or of cannon, the roaring of winds, the shouting of multitudes, the sound of vast cataracts of water, are all incontestibly grand objects. In general we may observe, that great power and force exerted, always raise sublime ideas; and perhaps the most copious source of these is derived from this quarter. Hence the grandeur of earthquakes and

burning mountains; of great conflagrations; of the stormy ocean, and overflowing waters; of tempests of wind; of thunder and lightning; and of all the uncommon violence of the elements.

2. Nothing is more sublime than mighty power and strength. A stream that runs within its banks is a beautiful object; but when it rushes down with the impetuosity and noise of a torrent, it presently becomes a sublime one. From lions, and other animals of strength, are drawn sublime comparisons in poets. A race-horse is looked upon with pleasure; but it is the war-horse, "whose neck is clothed with thunder," that carries grandeur in its appearance, or our idea of the animal.

3. The engagement of two great armies, as it is the highest exertion of human might, combines a variety of sources of the sublime; and has accordingly been always considered as one of the most striking and magnificent spectacles that can either be presented to the eye, or exhibited to the imagination in description.

Example. "Like Autumn's dark storms, pouring from two echoing hills, towards each other, approached the heroes: as two dark streams from high rocks, meet and roar on the plain, loud, rough, and dark in battle, meet Lochlin and Inisfail. Chief mixes his strokes with chief, and man with man: steel sounds on steel, and helmets are cleft on high; blood bursts, and smokes around: strings murmur on the polished yew: darts rush along the sky: spears fall like sparks of flame that gild the stormy face of night.

"As the noise of troubled ocean when roll the waves on high, as the last peal of thundering heaven; such is the noise of battle. Though Cormacs' hundred bards were there, feeble were the voice of an hundred bards, to send the deaths to future times; for many were the deaths of the heroes, and wide poured the blood of the valiant." *Fingal.*

Analysis. Never were images more awfully sublime, employed to heighten the terror of a battle.

393. For the farther illustration of this subject, it is proper to remark, that all ideas of the solemn and awful kind, and even bordering on the terrible, tend greatly to assist the sublime: such as *darkness*, *solitude*, and *silence*.

Illus. 1. What are the scenes of nature that elevate the mind in the highest degree, and produce the sublime sensation? Not the gay landscape, the flowery field, or the flourishing city; but the hoary mountain, and the solitary lake; the aged forest, and the torrent falling over the rock.

2. Hence, too, night-scenes are commonly the most sublime. The firmament, when filled with stars, scattered in such vast numbers, and with such magnificent profusion, strikes the imagination with a more awful grandeur, than when we view it enlightened with all the splendour of the sun.

3. The deep sound of a great bell, or the striking of a great clock, are at any time grand; but, when heard amid the silence and stillness of the night, they become doubly so.

4. Darkness is very commonly applied for adding sublimity to all our ideas of the Deity. "He maketh darkness his pavilion; he dwelleth in the thick cloud."

So Milton:

. . . . How oft, amidst
Thick clouds and dark, does Heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And, with the majesty of darkness, round
Circles his throne. - - - *Par. Lost*, Book II. 263.

394. OBSCURITY, we are farther to remark, is not unfavourable to the sublime. Though it render the object indistinct, the impression, however, may be great; for as an ingenious author has well observed, it is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagination; and the imagination may be strongly affected, and, in fact, often is so, by objects of which we have no clear conception.

Illus. Thus we see, that almost all the descriptions given us of the appearances of supernatural beings, carry some sublimity, though the conceptions which they afford us be confused and indistinct. Their sublimity arises from the ideas, which they always convey, of superior power and might, joined with an awful obscurity.

Example. We may see this fully exemplified in the following noble passage of the Book of Job: "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still; but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before my eyes; there was silence; and I heard a voice—shall mortal man be more just than God?"*

Scholium. No ideas, it is plain, are so sublime as those taken from the Supreme Being; the most unknown, but the greatest of all objects; the infinity of whose nature, and the eternity of whose duration, joined with the omnipotence of his power, though they surpass our conceptions, yet exalt them to the highest. In general, all objects that are greatly raised above us, or far removed from us, either in space or in time, are apt to strike us as great. Our viewing them as through the mist of distance or antiquity, is favourable to the impressions of their sublimity.

395. As obscurity, so *disorder* too, is very compatible with grandeur; nay, frequently heightens it. Few things that are strictly regular, and methodical, appear sublime.

Illus. We see the limits on every side: we feel ourselves confined; there is no room for the mind's exerting any great effort. Exact proportion of parts, though it enters often into the beautiful, is much disregarded in the sublime. A great mass of rocks, thrown together by the hand of nature, with wildness and confusion, strike the mind with more grandeur than if they had been adjusted to one another with the most accurate symmetry.

Obs. In the feeble attempts which human art can make towards producing grand objects, (feeble, doubtless, in comparison with the physical powers of nature,) greatness of dimensions always constitutes a principle part. No pile of building can convey any idea of sublimity, unless it be ample and lofty. There is, too, in architecture, what is

* Job iv. 13.

called greatness of manner; which seems chiefly to arise from presenting the object to us in one full point of view; so that it shall make its impression whole, entire, and undivided upon the mind. A Gothic cathedral raises ideas of grandeur in our minds, by its size, its height, its awful obscurity, it strength, its antiquity, and its durability.

396. There still remains to be mentioned one class of sublime objects, which may be called the *moral*, or *sentimental sublime*; arising from certain exertions of the human mind; from certain affections, and actions, of our fellow creatures.

Illus. These will be found to be all, or chiefly of that class, which comes under the head of magnanimity, or heroism; and they produce an effect extremely similar to what is produced by the view of grand objects in nature; filling the mind with admiration, and elevating it above itself.

Example 1.—*Somerset.* Ah! Warwick, Warwick, wert thou as we are,
We might recover all our loss again.
The Queen from France hath brought a puissant power;
Even now we heard the news. Ah! could'st thou fly!
Warwick. Why then I would not fly
Third Part of Henry VI. Act V. Scene 2.

Analysis. Such a sentiment from a man expiring of his wounds is truly heroic; and must elevate the mind to the greatest height that can be done by a single expression.

Example 2. Porus, taken prisoner by Alexander, after a gallant defence, and asked, How he wished to be treated? answered, "Like a king."

3. Cæsar chiding the pilot, who was afraid to set out with him in a storm, "Quid times? Cæsarem vehis;" is another good instance of this sentimental sublime.

Corol. Wherever, in some critical and high situation, we behold a man uncommonly intrepid, and resting upon himself; superior to passion and to fear; animated by some great principle to the contempt of popular opinion, of selfish interest, of dangers, or of death; there we are struck with a sense of the sublime. *(See Scholia 2. Art.* 419.)

397. High *virtue* is the most natural and fertile source of this moral sublimity. However, on some occasions, where virtue either has no place, or is but imperfectly displayed, yet if extraordinary vigour and force of mind be discovered, we are not insensible to a degree of grandeur in the character; and from the splendid conqueror, or the daring conspirator, whom we are far from approving, we cannot withhold our admiration.

Example. The sublime in natural, and the sublime in moral objects, are brought before us in one view, and compared together, in the following beautiful passage of Akenside's Pleasures of the Imagination:

Look then abroad through nature; to the range
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres,
Wheeling, unshaken, through the void immense;
And speak, O man! does this capacious scene,
With half that kindling majesty, dilate

Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose
Refulgent, from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,
Amid the croud of patriots: and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove,
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
And bade the father of his country hail!
For lo! the tyrant prostrate on the dust;
And Rome again is free. Book I.

Scholia 1. We have now enumerated a variety of instances, both in inanimate objects and in human life, where the sublime appears. In all these instances, the emotion raised in us is of the same kind, although the objects that produce the emotion be of widely different kinds.

2. A question next arises, whether we are able to discover some one fundamental quality, in which all these different objects agree, and which is the cause of their producing an emotion of the same nature in our minds? Various hypotheses have been formed concerning this.

3. Some have imagined that amplitude or great extent, joined with simplicity, is either immediately, or remotely, the fundamental quality of whatever is sublime; but we have seen that amplitude is confined to one species of sublime objects; and cannot, without violent straining, be applied to them all.

4 Again, terror has been supposed the source of the sublime, and that no objects have this character but such as produce impressions of pain and danger. It is indeed true, that many terrible objects are highly sublime; and that grandeur does not refuse an alliance with the idea of danger. But then this seems to stretch the theory too far; for the sublime does not consist wholly in modes of danger, or of pain. The proper sensation of sublimity appears to be distinguishable from the sensation of either of these; and, on several occasions, to be entirely separated from them.

5. In many grand objects, there is no coincidence with terror at all; as in the magnificent prospect of wide extended plains, and of the starry firmament; or in the moral dispositions and sentiments, which we view with high admiration; and in many painful and terrible objects also, it is clear, there is no sort of grandeur. The amputation of a limb, or the bite of a snake, are exceedingly terrible; but are destitute of all claim whatever to sublimity.

6. Mighty *force* or *power*, whether accompanied with terror or not, whether employed in protecting or in alarming us, has perhaps a better title than any thing that has yet been mentioned, to be the fundamental quality of the sublime; as, after the review which we have taken, there does not occur any sublime object, into the idea of which, *power*, or *strength*, or *force*, does not enter, either directly, or, at least, intimately associated with the idea, by leading our thoughts to some astonishing power, as concerned in the production of the object.

CHAPTER V.

THE SUBLIME IN WRITING.

398. HAVING treated of *grandeur* or *sublimity*, in *external* objects, the way seems now to be cleared, for treating,

with more advantage, of the description of such objects; or, of what is called *the sublime in writing*. The foundation of the sublime in composition, must always be laid in the nature of the object described.

Illus. 1. Unless it be such an object as, if presented to our eyes, if exhibited to us in reality, would raise ideas of that elvating, that awful, and magnificent kind, which we call sublime; the description, however finely drawn, is not entitled to come under this class. This excludes all objects that are merely beautiful, gay, or elegant.

2. In the next place, the object must not only, in itself, be sublime, but it must be set before us in such a light as is most proper to give us a clear and full impression of it; it must be described with strength, with conciseness, and simplicity. This depends principally, upon the lively impression which the poet, or orator, has of tne object which he exhibits; and upon his being deeply affected, and warmed, by the sublime idea which he would convey. If his own feeling be languid, he can never inspire us with any strong emotion. Instances, which are extremely necessary on this subject, will clearly shew the importance of all the requisites which we have just now mentioned.

399. It is, generally speaking, among the most ancient authors, that we are to look for the most striking instances of the sublime. The early ages of the world, and the rude unimproved state of society, are peculiarly favorable to the strong emotions of sublimity.

Illus. The genius of men is then much turned to admiration and astonishment. Meeting with many objects, to them new and strange, their imagination is kept glowing, and their passions are often raised to the utmost. They think, and express themselves boldly, and without restraint. In the progress of society, the genius and manners of men undergo a change more favourable to accuracy, than to strength or sublimity. *(See Art.* 31 *and* 32.*)*

400. Of all writings, ancient or modern, the sacred Scriptures afford us the highest instances of the sublime. The descriptions of the Deity, in them, are wonderfully noble; both from the grandeur of the object, and the manner of representing it.

Example 1. What an assemblage, for instance, of awful and sublime ideas is presented to us, in that passage of the 18th Psalm, where an appearance of the Almighty is described?

2. "In my distress I called upon the Lord; he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills were moved; because he was wroth. He bowed the heavens and came down, and darkness was under his feet; and he did ride upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the sky."

Analysis. Here, agreeably to the principles established in Chapter IV. *(Art.* 394.*)* we see with what propriety and success the circum-

stances of darkness and terror are applied for heightening the sublime.

Example 3. So, also, the prophet Habakkuk, in a similar passage: "He stood and measured the earth; he beheld, and drove asunder the nations. The everlasting mountains were scattered; the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlasting. The mountains saw thee; and they trembled. The overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high."

4. There is a passage in the Psalms, which deserves to be mentioned under this head: "God stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumults of the people."

Analysis. The joining together two such grand objects, as the raging of the waters, and the tumults of the people, between which there is so much resemblance as to form a very natural association in the fancy, and the representing them both as subject, at one moment, to the command of God, produces a noble effect.

401. Homer is a poet, who, in all ages, and by all critics, has been greatly admired for sublimity; and he owes much of his grandeur to that native and unaffected simplicity, which characterises his manner.

Illus. His descriptions of hosts engaging; the animation, the fire, and rapidity, which he throws into his battles, present to every reader of the Iliad, frequent instances of sublime writing. His introduction of the gods, tends often to heighten, in a high degree, the majesty of his warlike scenes.

Example 1. Hence Longinus bestows such high and just commendations on that passage in the 15th Book of the Iliad, where Neptune, when preparing to issue forth into the engagement, is described as shaking the mountains with his steps, and driving his chariot along the ocean.

2. Minerva, arming herself for fight, in the 5th Book; and Apollo, in the 15th, leading on the Trojans, and flashing terror with his ægis on the face of the Greeks; are similar instances of great sublimity added to the description of battles, by the appearances of those celestial beings.

3. In the 20th Book, where all the gods take part in the engagement, according as they severally favour either the Grecians or the Trojans, the poet's genius is signally displayed, and the description rises into the most awful magnificence. All nature is represented as in commotion. Jupiter thunders in the heavens; Neptune strikes the earth with his trident; the ships, the city, and the mountains shake; the earth trembles to its centre; Pluto starts from his throne, in dread, lest the secrets of the infernal regions should be laid open to the views of mortals.

402. The works of Ossian abound with examples of the sublime. The subjects of which that author treats, and the manner in which he writes, are particularly favourable to it.

Illus. He possesses all the plain and venerable manner of the ancient times. He deals in no superfluous or gaudy ornaments; but throws forth his images with a rapid conciseness, which enables them to strike the mind with the greatest force. Among poets of more polished

times, we are to look for the graces of correct writing, for just proportion of parts, and skilfully conducted narration. In the midst of smiling scenery and pleasurable themes, the gay and the beautiful will appear, undoubtedly, to more advantage. But amidst the rude scenes of nature and of society, such as Ossian describes; amidst rocks, and torrents, and whirlwinds, and battles, dwells the sublime; and there it naturally associates itself with that grave and solemn spirit, which distinguishes the author of Fingal.

403. *Conciseness* and *simplicity* are essential to sublime writing. Simplicity is opposed to studied and profuse ornament; and conciseness, to superfluous expression.

Illus. We shall now explain why a defect, either in conciseness or simplicity, is hurtful, in a peculiar manner, to the sublime. The emotion occasioned in the mind by some great or noble object, raises it considerably above its ordinary pitch. A sort of enthusiasm is produced, extremely agreeable while it lasts; but from which the mind is tending every moment to fall into its ordinary situation. Now, when an author has brought us, or is attempting to bring us, into this state, if he multiplies words unnecessarily, if he decks the sublime object which he presents to us, round and round, with glittering ornaments; nay, if he throws in any one decoration that sinks in the least below the capital image, that moment he alters the key; he relaxes the tension of the mind; the strength of the feeling is emasculated; the beautiful may remain, but the sublime is gone.

Example 1. When Julius Cæsar said to the pilot, who was afraid to put to sea with him in a storm, "Quid times? Cæsarem vehis;" (*Example* 3. *Art.* 396.) we are struck with the daring magnanimity of one relying with such confidence on his cause and his fortune. These few words convey every thing necessary to give us the impression full.

2. Lucan resolved to amplify and adorn the thought. Observe how every time he twists it round, it departs farther from the sublime, till it end at last in tumid declamation. In Rowe's translation the passage runs thus:

> But Cæsar still superior to distress,
> Fearless, and confident of sure success.
> Thus to the pilot loud:—The seas despise,
> And the vain threatening of the noisy skies:
> Though gods deny thee yon Ausonian strand,
> Yet go, I charge you, go at my command.
> Thy ignorance alone can cause thy fears,
> Thou know'st not what a freight thy vessel bears:
> Thou know'st not I am he to whom 'tis given
> Never to want the care of watchful heaven.
> Obedient fortune waits my humble thrall,
> And, always ready, comes before I call.
> Let winds, and seas, loud wars at freedom wage,
> And waste upon themselves their empty rage;
> A stronger, mightier dæmon is thy friend,
> Thou and thy bark on Cæsar's fate depend.
> Thou stand'st amazed to view this dreadful scene,
> And wonder'st what the Gods and Fortune mean:
> But artfully their bounties thus they raise,
> And from my danger arrogate new praise:
> Amidst the fears of death they bid me live,
> And still enhance what they are sure to give."*

* Sperne minas, inquit, pelagi, ventoque furenti
Trade sinum: Italiam, si, cœlo auctore, recusas,
Me, pete. Sola tibi causa hæc est justa timoris

404. On account of the great importance of simplicity and conciseness, rhyme, in English verse, if not inconsistent with the sublime, is at least very unfavourable to it. The constrained elegance of this kind of verse, and studied smoothness of the sounds, answering regularly to each other at the end of the line, though they be quite consistent with gentle emotions, yet weaken the native force of sublimity; besides, that the superfluous words which the poet is often obliged to introduce in order to fill up the rhyme, tend farther to enfeeble it.

Example. Homer's description of the nod of Jupiter, as shaking the heavens, has been admired in all ages as highly sublime. Literally translated, it runs thus: "He spoke, and bending his sable brows, gave the awful nod; while he shook the celestial locks of his immortal head, all Olympus was shaken."

Pope translates it thus:

> He spoke; and awful bends his sable brows,
> Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod,
> The stamp of fate, and sanction of a God.
> High heaven with trembling the dread signal took,
> And all Olympus to its centre shook.

Analysis. The image is spread out, and attempted to be beautified; but it is, in truth, weakened. The third line—"The stamp of fate, and sanction of a God," is merely repletive; and introduced for no other reason but to fill up the rhyme; for it interrupts the description, and clogs the image. For the same reason, out of mere compliance with the rhyme, Jupiter is represented as shaking his locks before he gives the nod;—"Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod," which is trifling, and without meaning. Whereas, in the original, the hair of his head shaken, is the effect of his nod, and makes a happy picturesque circumstance in the description.*

405. The boldness, freedom, and variety of our blank verse, are infinitely more favourable than rhyme can be to all kinds of sublime poetry. The fullest proof of this is afforded by Milton; an author whose genius led him eminently to the sublime. The whole first and second books of Paradise Lost, are continued instances of it.

Example. Take only for an example, the following noted description of Satan after his fall, appearing at the head of the infernal hosts:

> Victorem non posse tuum; quem numina nunquam
> Destituunt; de quo male tunc Fortuna meretur
> Cum post vota venit. Medias perrumpe procellas
> Tutela secure meâ. Cœli iste fretique
> Non puppis nostræ labor est. Hanc Cæsare pressam
> A fluctu defendet onus; nam proderit undis
> Iste ratis: Quid tanta strage paratur
> Ignoras; quærit pelagi cœlique tumultu
> Quid præstet fortuna mihi.—*Phars. V.* 578.

* See Webb on the Beauties of Poetry.

- - - - He, above the rest,
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun, new risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all, th' archangel. - - - -

Analysis. Here concur a variety of sources of the sublime; the principal object eminently great; a high superior nature, fallen indeed, but erecting itself against distress; the grandeur of the principal object heightened, by associating it with so noble an idea, as that of the sun suffering an eclipse; this picture shaded with all those images of change and trouble, of darkness and terror, which coincide so finely with the sublime emotion; and the whole expressed in a style and versification, easy, natural, and simple, but magnificent.

406. Simplicity and conciseness are essential to *sublime* in *writing*; *(Art.* 403.*)* but *strength* is another necessary requisite. The strength of description arises, in a great measure, from a simple conciseness; but, it supposes also something more; namely, a proper choice of circumstances in the description, so as to exhibit the object in its full and most striking point of view.

Illus. 1. For every object has several faces, so to speak, by which it may be presented to us, according to the circumstances with which it may be surrounded; and it will appear eminently sublime, or not, in proportion as all these circumstances are happily chosen, and of a sublime kind. Here lies the great art of the writer: and indeed, the great difficulty of sublime description. If the description be too general, and divested of circumstances, the object appears in a faint light; it makes a feeble impression, or no impression at all, on the reader. At the same time, if any trivial or improper circumstances are mingled, the whole is degraded.

2. A storm or tempest, for instance, is a sublime object in nature. But, to render it sublime in description, it is not enough, either to give us mere general expressions concerning the violence of the tempest, or to describe its common vulgar effects, in overthrowing trees and houses. It must be painted with such circumstances as fill the mind with great and awful ideas.

Example. This is very happily done in the following passage.

The Father of the Gods his glory shrouds,
Involved in tempests, and a night of clouds:
And from the middle darkness flashing out,
By fits he deals his fiery bolts about.
Earth feels the motions of her angry God,
Her entrails tremble, and her mountains nod,
And flying beasts in forests seek abode.
Deep horror seizes every human breast;
Their pride is humbled, and their fears confest;
While he from high his rolling thunder throws,
And fires the mountains with repeated blows;

The rocks are from their old foundations rent;
The winds redouble, and the rains augment.* *Dryden.*

Analysis. Every circumstance in this noble description is the production of an imagination heated and astonished with the grandeur of the object.

407. The sublime depends upon a just selection of circumstances; and great care, in writing, that every circumstance be avoided, which, by bordering in the least upon the mean, or even upon the gay or the trifling, might alter the tone of the emotion.

Illus. 1. The proper sources of the sublime are to be looked for every where in nature. It is not by hunting after tropes and figures, and rhetorical assistances, that we can expect to produce it. No: it stands clear for the most part of these laboured refinements of art. It must come unsought, if it comes at all; and be the natural offspring of a strong imagination.

Est Deus in nobis; agitante calesimus illo.

2. Wherever a great and awful object is presented in nature, or a very magnanimous and exalted affection of the human mind is displayed; thence, if you can catch the impression strongly, and exhibit it warm and glowing, you may draw the sublime. These are its only proper sources. In judging of any striking beauty in composition, whether it is or is not to be referred to this class, we must attend to the nature of the emotion which it raises; and only if it be of that elevating, solemn, and awful kind, which distinguishes this feeling, we can pronounce it sublime.

Scholium. From the account which has been given of the nature of the sublime, it clearly follows, that it is an emotion which can never be long protracted. The mind by no force of genius, can be kept, for any considerable time, so far raised above its common tone; but will, of course, relax into its ordinary situation. Neither are the abilities of any human writer sufficient to furnish a long continuation of uninterrupted sublime ideas. The utmost we can expect, is, that this fire of imagination should sometimes flash upon us like lightning from heaven, and then disappear. In Homer and Milton, this effulgence of genius breaks forth more frequently, and with greater lustre than in most authors. Shakespeare also rises often into the true sublime. But no author whatever is sublime throughout. Some, indeed, there are, who, by a strength and dignity in their conceptions, and a current of high ideas that runs through their whole composition, preserve the reader's mind always in a tone nearly allied to the sublime; for which reason they may, in a limited sense, merit the name of continued sublime writers; and in this class we may justly place Demosthenes and Plato.

408. As for what is called *the sublime style*, it is, for the most part, a *very bad one*; and has no relation whatever to the real sublime.

* Ipse Pater, mediâ nimborum in nocte, corusca
Fulmina molitur dextrâ; quo maximus motu
Terra tremit; fugere feræ; et mortalia corda
Per gentes humilis stravit pavor: ille flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit.——— *George I.*

Illus. Persons are apt to imagine that magnificent words, accumulated epithets, and a certain swelling kind of expression, by rising above what is usual or vulgar, contributes to the sublime; nay, even forms this style. Nothing can be more false. In all the instances of sublime writing, which we have given, nothing of this kind appears.

Example. "God said let there be light, and there was light."

Analysis. This is striking and sublime. But put it into what is commonly called the sublime style: "The sovereign Arbiter of nature, by the potent energy of a single word, commanded the light to exist;" and, as Boileau has well observed, the style indeed is raised, but the thought is fallen.

Corol. 1. In general in all good writing, the sublime lies in the thought, not in the words; and when the thought is truly noble, it will, for the most part, clothe itself in a native dignity of language. The sublime, indeed, rejects mean, low, or trivial expressions; but it is equally an enemy to such as are turgid. The main secret of being sublime, is to say great things in few and plain words.

2. It will be found to hold, without exception, that the most sublime authors are the simplest in their style; and wherever you find a writer, who affects a more than ordinary pomp and parade of words, and is always endeavouring to magnify his subject by epithets, there you may immediately suspect, that, feeble in sentiment, he is studying to support himself by mere expression.

409. The same unfavourable judgment we must pass on all that laboured apparatus with which some writers introduce a passage or description, which they intend shall be sublime; calling on their readers to attend, invoking their muse, or breaking forth into general, unmeaning exclamations, concerning the greatness, terribleness, or majesty of the object, which they are to describe.

Example. Addison, in his Campaign, has fallen into an error of this kind, when about to describe the battle of Blenheim:

> But O! my Muse! what numbers wilt thou find
> To sing the furious troops in battle join'd?
> Methinks I hear the drum's tumultuous sound,
> The victor's shouts, and dying groans, confound; &c.

Analysis. Introductions of this kind, are a forced attempt in a writer to spur up himself, and his reader, when he finds his imagination begin to flag. It is like taking artificial spirits in order to supply the want of such as are natural By this observation, however, it is not meant to pass a general censure on Addison's Campaign, which, in several places, is far from wanting merit; and, in particular, the noted comparison of his hero to the angel who rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm, is a truly sublime image.

410. The faults opposite to the sublime, are chiefly two; first, the *frigid;* and, secondly, the *bombast.*

Illus. 1. The frigid consists in degrading an object, or sentiment, which is sublime in itself, by our weak conception of it; or, by our weak, low, and childish description of it. This betrays entire absence, or at least, great poverty of genius. *(See Art. 204.)*

2. Bombast lies in forcing an ordinary or trivial object out of its rank, and endeavouring to raise it into the sublime; or, in attempting to exalt a sublime object beyond all natural and reasonable bounds. Into this error, which is but too common, writers of genius may sometimes fall, by unluckily losing sight of the true point of the sublime. This is also called fustain, or rant. Shakespeare, a great but incorrect genius, is not unexceptionable here. Dryden and Lee, in their tragedies, abound with it. *(See Chapter VIII. Book III.)*

CHAPTER VI.

BEAUTY, AND OTHER PLEASURES OF TASTE.

411. **BEAUTY**, next to sublimity, affords, beyond doubt, the highest pleasure to the imagination. The emotion which it raises, is very distinguishable from that of sublimity. It is of a calmer kind; more gentle and soothing; it does not elevate the mind so much, but produces an agreeable serenity. Sublimity raises a feeling too violent to be lasting: the pleasure arising from beauty admits of longer continuance. It extends also to a much greater variety of objects than sublimity; to a variety indeed so great, that the feelings which beautiful objects produce, differ considerably, not in degree only, but also in kind, from one another. Hence, no word in the language is used in a more vague signification than beauty.

Illus. It is applied to almost every external object that pleases the eye, or the ear; to a great number of the graces of writing; to many dispositions of the mind; nay, to several objects of mere abstract science. We talk currently of a beautiful tree, or flower; a beautiful poem; a beautiful character; and a beautiful threorem in mathematics.

Scholia 1. Hence we may easily perceive, that, among so great a variety of objects, to find out some one quality in which they all agree, and which is the foundation of that agreeable sensation they all raise, must be a very difficult, if not, more probably, a vain attempt.

2. Objects, denominated beautiful, are so different, as to please, not in virtue of any one quality common to them all, but by means of several different principles in human nature. The agreeable emotion which they all raise, is somewhat of the same nature; and, therefore, has the common name of beauty given to it; but it is raised by different causes.

412. Hypotheses, however, have been framed by ingenious men, for assigning the fundamental quality of beauty in all objects. In particular, *uniformity amidst variety*, has been insisted on as this fundamental quality. This accounts, in a satisfactory manner, for the beauty of many figures.

Illus. But when we endeavour to apply this principle to beautiful objects of some other kind, as to *colour*, for instance, or *motion*, we shall soon find that it has no place. And even in external figured objects, it does not hold that their beauty is in proportion to their mixture of variety with uniformity; seeing many please us as highly beautiful, which have scarcely any variety; and others, which are various to a degree of intricacy.

Obs. Laying systems of this kind, therefore, aside, we propose to give an enumeration of several of those classes of objects in which beauty most remarkably appears; and to point out, as far as the limits of this work will admit, the separate principles of beauty in each of them.

413. Colour affords, perhaps, the simplest instance of beauty, and therefore the fittest to begin with. Here, neither variety, nor uniformity, nor any other principle, can perhaps be assigned, as the foundation of beauty.

Illus. 1. We can refer it to no other cause except the structure of the eye, which determines us to receive certain modifications of the rays of light with more pleasure than others. And we see accordingly, that, as the organ of sensation varies in different persons, they have their different favourite colours. It is probable, that association of ideas has influence, in some cases, on the pleasure which we receive from colours.

Example. Green, for instance, may appear more beautiful, by being connected in our ideas with rural prospects and scenes; white, with innocence; blue, with the serenity of the sky.

Illus. 2. Independent of associations of this kind, all that we can farther observe concerning colours, is, that those chosen for beauty are, generally, delicate rather than glaring.

Example. Such are those paintings with which nature hath ornamented some of her works, and which art strives in vain to imitate; as the feathers of several kinds of birds, the leaves of flowers, and the fine variation of colours exhibited by the sky at the rising and setting of the sun.

Corol. These present to us the highest instances of the beauty of colouring; and have accordingly been the favourite subjects of poetical description in all countries.

414. From colour we proceed to *figure*, which opens to us forms of beauty more complex and diversified.

415. Regularity *of figure* first occurs to be noticed as a source of beauty.

Illus. 1. By a *regular* figure, is meant, one which we perceive to be formed according to some certain rule, and not left arbitrary, or loose, in the construction of its parts.

Example. Thus, a circle, a square, a triangle, or a hexagon, pleases the eye, by its regularity, as a beautiful figure.

Analysis. We must not, however, conclude, that all figures please in proportion to their regularity; or that regularity is the sole, or the chief foundation of beauty in figure. On the contrary, a certain graceful variety is found to be a much more powerful principle of beauty; and is therefore studied a great deal more than regularity, in all works that are designed to please the eye.

Illus. 2. Regularity appears beautiful to us, chiefly, if not only, on account of its suggesting the ideas of *fitness*, *propriety*, and *use*—qualities which have always a greater connection with orderly and proportioned forms, than with those which appear not constructed according to any certain rule. It is clear that Nature, who is undoubtedly the most graceful artist, hath, in all her ornamental works, pursued variety, with an apparent neglect of regularity.

Examples. Cabinets, made after a regular form, in cubes, doors, and windows, constructed in the form of parallelograms, with exact proportion of parts, by being so formed, please the eye: the reason is obvious; being works of use, they are, by such figures, the better suited to the ends for which they were designed. But plants, flowers, and leaves, are full of variety and diversity. A straight canal is an insipid figure, in comparison of the meanders of rivers. Cones and pyramids are beautiful; but trees, growing in their natural wildness, are infinitely more beautiful than when trimmed into pyramids and cones; as is the fashion, for instance, in almost all gardens and pleasure-grounds. The apartments of a house must be regular in their disposition, for the conveniency of its inhabitants; but a garden, which is designed merely for beauty, is exceedingly disgusting, when it has as much uniformity and order in its parts as a dwelling-house.*

416. Hogarth, in his Analysis of Beauty, has observed, that figures, bounded by curve lines, are, in general, more beautiful than those bounded by straight lines and angles.

Illus. He pitches upon two lines, on which, according to him, the beauty of figure principally depends; and he has illustrated and supported his doctrine, by a surprising number of instances.

Example 1. The one is the *waving line*, or a curve bending backwards and forwards, somewhat in the form of the letter S.

Analysis. This he calls the line of beauty; and shows how often it is found in shells, flowers, and such other ornamental works of nature; and how common it also is in the figures designed by painters and sculptors, for the purpose of decoration.

Example 2. The other line, which he calls the *line of grace*, is the former waving curve, twisted round some solid body. The curling worm of a common jack is one of the instances he gives of it. Twisted pillars, and twisted horns, also exhibit it.

Analysis. In all the instances which he mentions, *variety* plainly appears to be so material a principle of beauty that he seems not to err much when he defines the art of drawing pleasing forms, to be the art of varying well. For the curve line, so much the favourite of painters, derives, according to him, its chief advantage, from its perpetual bending and variation from the stiff regularity of the straight line.

417. Motion furnishes another source of beauty, distinct from figure. Motion of itself is pleasing; and bodies in motion are, "*cæteris paribus*," preferred to those in rest. It is, however, only gentle motion that belongs to the beautiful; for, when it is very swift, or very forcible, such as that of a torrent, it partakes of the sublime. (*Illus.* 2. *Art.* 392.)

* See Lord Kames's Elements of Criticism, vol. ii. chap. 24.

Example 1. The motion of a *bird* gliding through the air is extremely beautiful; the swiftness with which *lightning* darts through the heavens is magnificent and astonishing.

Obs. And here it is proper to observe, that the sensations of sublime and beautiful are not always distinguished by very distant boundaries; but are capable, in several instances, of approaching towards each other.

Example 2. Thus, a smooth running stream is one of the most beautiful objects in nature: as it swells gradually into a great river, the beautiful, by degrees, is lost in the sublime.

3. A young tree is a beautiful object; a spreading ancient oak is a venerable and a grand one.

4. The calmness of a fine morning is beautiful; the universal stillness of the evening is highly sublime.

Illus. But to return to the beauty of motion, it will be found to hold, very generally, that motion in a straight line is not so beautiful as in an undulating waving direction; and motion upwards is, commonly too, more agreeable than motion downwards.

Example 5. The easy curling motion of flame and smoke may be instanced, as an object singularly agreeable; and here Mr. Hogarth's waving line recurs upon us as a principle of beauty.

Corol. That artist observes, very ingeniously, that all the common and necessary motions for the business of life, are performed by men in straight or plain lines; but that all the graceful and ornamental movements are made in waving lines; an observation not unworthy of being attended to, by all who study the grace of gesture and action.

418. Though *colour*, *figure*, and *motion*, be separate principles of *beauty*; yet in many beautiful objects they all meet, and thereby render the beauty both greater and more complex.

Example 1. Thus, in flowers, trees, and animals, we are entertained at once with the delicacy of the colour, with the gracefulness of the figure, and sometimes also with the motion of the object.

Analysis. Although each of these produces a separate agreeable sensation, yet they are of such a similar nature, as readily to mix and blend in one general perception of beauty, which we ascribe to the whole object as its cause: for beauty is always conceived by us as something residing in the object which raises the pleasant sensation; a sort of glory which dwells upon it, and that invests it.

Example 2. Perhaps the most complete assemblage of beautiful objects that can any where be found, is presented by a rich natural landscape, where there is a sufficient variety of objects: fields in verdure, scattered trees and flowers, running water, and animals grazing.

Analysis. If to these be joined some of the productions of art which suit such a scene, as a bridge with arches over a river, smoke rising from cottages in the midst of trees, and the distant view of a fine building seen, at the same time, with the rising sun; we then enjoy, in the highest perfection, that gay, cheerful, and placid sensation which characterises beauty.

Corol. To have an eye and a taste formed for catching the peculiar beauties of such scenes as these, is a necessary requisite for all who attempt poetical description.

419. The *beauty of the human countenance* is more complex than any that we have yet considered. It includes the *beauty of colour*, arising from the *delicate shades of the complexion*; and the *beauty of figure*, arising from the *lines* which form the different features of the face. But the chief beauty of the countenance depends upon a mysterious expression, which it conveys, of the qualities of the mind; of good sense, or good humour; of sprightliless, candour, benevolence, sensibility, or other amiable dispositions.

Analysis. How it comes to pass, that a certain conformation of features is connected in our idea with certain moral qualities; whether we are taught by instinct, or by experience, to form this connection, and to read the mind in the countenance, belongs not to us now to inquire, nor is it indeed easy to resolve. The fact is certain, and acknowledged, that what gives the human countenance its most distinguishing beauty, is, what is called its expression; or an image, which it is conceived, to shew of internal moral dispositions.

Scholia 1. This leads us to observe, that there are certain qualities of a mind, which, whether expressed in the countenance, or by words, or by actions, always raise in us a feeling similar to that of beauty.

2. There are two great classes of moral qualities; one is of the high and the great virtues, which require extraordinary efforts, and turn upon dangers and sufferings; as *heroism*, *magnanimity*, *contempt of pleasures*, and *contempt of death*. These excite in the spectator an emotion of sublimity and grandeur. (*Illus. Art.* 396.)

3. The other class is generally of the social virtues, and such as are of a softer and gentler kind; as compassion, mildness, friendship, and generosity. These raise in the beholder a sensation of pleasure, so much akin to that produced by beautiful external objects, that, though of a more dignified nature, it may, without impropriety, be classed under the same head.

420. A species of beauty, distinct from any that we have yet mentioned, arises from *design*, or *art*; or, in other words, from *the perception of means being adapted to an end*; or the parts of any thing being well fitted to answer the design of the whole.

Illus. When, in considering the structure of a tree, or a plant, we observe how all the parts, the roots, the stem, the bark, and the leaves, are suited to the growth and nutriment of the whole; much more when we survey all the parts and members of a living animal; or when we examine any of the curious works of art; such as a clock, a ship, or any nice machine; the pleasure we have in the survey is wholly founded on this sense of beauty. It is altogether different from the perception of beauty produced by colour, figure, variety, or any of the causes formerly mentioned.

Analysis. When you look at a watch, for instance, the case of it, if finely engraved, and of curious workmanship, strikes you as beautiful in the former sense; bright colour, exquisite polish, figures finely raised and turned. But when you examine the spring and the wheels, and examine the beauty of the internal machinery; your pleasure then

arises wholly from the view of that admirable art with which so many various and complicated parts are made to unite for one purpose.

421. This sense of beauty in fitness and design, has an extensive influence over many of our ideas. It is the foundation of the beauty which we discover in the proportion of *doors, windows, arches, pillars,* and *all the orders of architecture.*

Illus. 1. Let the ornaments of a building be ever so fine and elegant in themselves, yet if they interfere with this sense of fitness and design, they lose their beauty, and hurt the eye like disagreeable objects.

2. Twisted columns, for instance, are undoubtedly ornamental; but as they have an appearance of weakness, they always displease when they are made use of to support any part of a building that is massy, and that seems to require a more substantial prop.

3. We cannot look upon any work whatever, without being led, by a natural association of ideas, to think of its end and design, and of course to examine the propriety of its parts, in relation to this design and end. When their propriety is clearly discerned, the work seems always to have some beauty; but when there is a total want of propriety, it never fails of appearing deformed.

4. Our sense of fitness and design, therefore, is so powerful, and holds so high a rank among our perceptions, as to regulate in a great measure, our other ideas of beauty. This observation is of the utmost importance, to all who study composition. For in an epic poem, a history, an oration, or any work of genius, we always require, as we do in other works, a fitness, or adjustment of means, to the end which the author is supposed to have in view. Let his descriptions be ever so rich, or his figures ever so elegant, yet if they are out of place, if they are not proper parts of that whole, if they suit not the main design, they lose all their beauty; nay, from beauties they are converted into deformities. Such power has our sense of fitness and congruity, to produce a total transformation of an object whose appearance otherwise would have been beautiful.

422. After having mentioned so many various species of beauty, it now only remains to take notice of *beauty,* as it is applied to *writing* or *discourse;* a term commonly used in a sense altogether loose and undetermined. For it is applied to all that pleases, either in style or in sentiment, from whatever principle that pleasure flows; and a *beautiful* poem or oration *means,* in *common language,* no other than a *good one,* or *one well composed.*

Illus. 1. In this sense, it is plain, the word is altogether indefinite, and points at no particular species or kind of beauty.

2. There is, however, another sense, somewhat more definite, in which beauty of writing characterises a particular manner; when it is used to signify a certain grace and amenity, in the turn either of style or sentiment, for which some authors have been peculiarly distinguished.

3. In this sense, it denotes a manner neither remarkably sublime, nor vehemently passionate, nor uncommonly sparkling; but such as

raises in the reader an emotion of the gentle placid kind, similar to what is raised by the contemplation of beautiful objects in nature; which neither lifts the mind very high, nor agitates it very much, but diffuses over the imagination an agreeable and pleasing serenity.

Scholia 1. Addison is a writer altogether of this character; and is one of the most proper and precise examples that can be given of it. Fenelon, the author of the Adventures of Telemachus, may be given as another example. Virgil too, though very capable of rising on occasions into the sublime, yet, in his general manner, is distinguished by the character of beauty and grace, rather than of sublimity. Among orators, Cicero has more of the beautiful than Demosthenes, whose genius led him wholly towards vehemence and strength.

2. This much it is sufficient to have said upon the subject of beauty. We have traced it through a variety of forms; because next to sublimity, it is the most copious source of the pleasures of taste; and because the consideration of the different appearances, and principles of beauty, tends to the improvement of taste in many subjects.

3. But it is not only by appearing under the forms of *sublime* or *beautiful*, that objects delight the imagination. From several other principles, also, they derive their power of giving it pleasure.

423. NOVELTY, for instance, has been mentioned by Addison, by Kames, and by every writer on this subject. An object that has no merit to recommend it, except its being uncommon or new, by means of this quality alone, produces in the mind a vivid and an agreeable emotion. Hence that passion of *curiosity*, which prevails so generally among mankind.

Illus. Objects and ideas which have been long familiar, make too faint an impression to give an agreeable exercise to our faculties. New and strange objects rouse the mind from its dormant state, by giving it a quick and pleasing impulse. Hence, in a great measure, the entertainment afforded us by fiction and romance. The emotion raised by novelty is of a more lively and pungent nature than that produced by beauty; but much shorter in its continuance. For if the object have in itself no charms to hold our attention, the shining gloss thrown upon it by novelty soon wears off.

424. Besides novelty, *imitation* is another source of pleasure to taste. This gives rise to what are termed, the *secondary pleasures of imagination;* which form, doubtless, a very extensive class.

Illus. For all imitation affords some pleasure; not only the imitation of beautiful or great objects, by recalling the original ideas of beauty or grandeur which such objects themselves exhibited; but even objects which have neither beauty nor grandeur, nay, some which are terrible or deformed, please us in a secondary or represented view.

425. The pleasures of *melody* and *harmony* belong also to taste. There is no agreeable sensation we receive either from beauty or sublimity, but what is capable of being heightened by the power of musical sound. Hence the de-

light of poetical numbers; and even of the more concealed and looser measures of prose.

426. *Wit, humour,* and *ridicule,* likewise open a variety to pleasures of taste, quite distinct from any that we have yet considered.

427. WIT is a quality of certain thoughts and expressions; the term is never applied to an action, nor to a passion; far less to an external object.*

Illus. 1. *Wit* is a term appropriated to such thoughts and expressions as are ludicrous, and also occasion some degree of surprise by their singularity.

2. *Wit* also, in a figurative sense, expresses a talent for inventing ludicrous thoughts or expressions: we say commonly *a witty man,* or *a man of wit. Hudibras* is *a man of wit; Falstaff* is *a witty man: Swift* is both.

3. *Wit,* in its proper sense, as explained above, is distinguishable into two kinds; *wit in the thought,* and *wit in the words or expressions.*

4. Again: *wit in the thought,* is of two kinds; *ludicrous images,* and *ludicrous combinations,* that have little or no natural relation.

5. *Ludicrous images,* which surprise by their singularity, are fabricated by the imagination; and *ludicrous combinations* are such an assemblage of ideas or of things, as by distant and fanciful relations, surprise, because they are unexpected.

428. HUMOUR. Nothing just or proper is denominated humour; nor any singularity of character, words, or actions that is valued or respected.

Illus. 1. When we attend to the character of an humourist, we find that it arises from circumstances both risible and improper, and therefore that it lessens the man in our esteem, and makes him in some measure ridiculous.

2. A *ludicrous writer* is one who insists upon ludicrous subjects with the professed purpose to make his readers laugh; a *writer of humour* is one, who, affecting to be grave and serious, paints his subjects in such colours as to provoke mirth and laughter.

Example. Swift and Fontaine were humourists in character, and their writings are full of humour. Arbuthnot outdoes them in drollery and humourous painting; but he who should say that Addison was an humourist in character, would be suspected of mistaking horse chesnuts for chesnut horses.

429. RIDICULE. A visible object produceth an emotion of laughter merely, a ridiculous object is improper as well as risible, and produceth a mixed emotion, which is vented by a laugh of derision or scorn.†

Obs. Burlesque is a great engine of ridicule: it is distinguishable into the burlesque that excites laughter merely, and the burlesque that provokes derision or ridicule.

Examples. Virgil Travestie, and the Lutrin, are compositions which

* Kames' Essays, chap. 13. vol I.
† Arist. Poet. ch. 5. Cicero de Oratore, L. 2. Quinctilian, lib. 6. cap. 3.

come under this article. The Rape of the Lock is not strictly burlesque, but *an heroic-comical* poem. Addison's *Spectator** on the Fan is extremely gay and ludicrous.

Scholium. This singular advantage *writing* and *discourse* possess, that, in every point of view, they encompass a large and rich field, in respect to the pleasures of taste; and have power to exhibit, in great perfection, not a single set of objects only, but almost the whole of those which give pleasure to taste and imagination: whether that pleasure arise from sublimity, from beauty in its different forms, from design and art, from moral sentiment, from novelty, from harmony, from wit, humour, and ridicule. To whichsoever of these the peculiar bent of a person's taste lies, from some writer or other he has it always in his power to receive the gratification of his taste.

430. The high power which eloquence and poetry possess, of supplying taste and imagination with an extensive circle of pleasures, they derive altogether from their having a greater capacity of *imitation* and *description* than is possessed by any other art.

Illus. 1. Of all the means which human ingenuity has contrived for recalling the images of real objects, and awakening, by representation, similar emotions to those which are raised by the original, none is so full and extensive as that which is executed by words and writing. Through the assistance of this happy invention, there is nothing, either in the natural or in the moral world that cannot be represented and set before the mind, in colours very strong and lively.

Corol. Hence it is usual among critical writers to speak of *discourse* as the chief of all the *imitative* or *mimical* arts; they compare it with *painting* and with *sculpture*, and in many respects prefer it justly before them.

Illus. 2. Imitation is performed by means of something that has a natural likeness and resemblance to the thing imitated; and of consequence is understood by all: statues and pictures, are examples of likenesses.

2. Description, again, is the raising in the mind the conception of an object by means of some arbitrary or instituted symbols, understood only by those who agree in the institution of them; such are words and writing.

3. Words, though copies, (*Art.* 432.) have no natural resemblance to the ideas or objects which they are employed to signify; but a statue or picture has a natural likeness to the original. And therefore imitation and description differ considerably in their nature from each other.

431. As far, indeed, as the poet introduces into his work persons actually speaking; and, by the words which he puts into their mouths, represents the discourse which they might be supposed to hold; so far his art may more accurately be called imitative; and this is the case in all dramatic composition. But, in narrative or descriptive works, it can with no propriety be called so.

* No. 102.

Illus. 1. Who, for instance, would call Virgil's description of a tempest, in the first Æneid, an imitation of a storm? If we heard of the imitation of a battle we might naturally think of some sham-fight, or representation of a battle on the stage, but could never apprehend that it meant one of Homer's descriptions in the Iliad.

2. But *imitation* and *description* agree in their *principal effect*, of recalling, by external signs, the ideas of things which they do not see. But though in this they coincide, yet it should not be forgotten, that the terms themselves are not synonymous; that they import different means of effecting the same end; and of course make different impressions on the mind.

Scholium. Whether we consider *poetry* in particular, and *discourse* in general, as *imitative* or *descriptive;* it is evident, that their whole power in recalling the impressions of real objects, is derived from the significancy, the choice and arrangement of words. Their excellency flows altogether from these sources. Having shewn how the source may be preserved pure, we shall, in the next book, enter upon style and eloquence in their most extensive signification.

BOOK VI.

THE GENERAL CHARACTERS OF STYLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIFFUSE AND CONCISE STYLES.

432. WORDS being the *copies* of our *ideas*, there must always be a very intimate connection between the manner in which we employ words, and our manner of thinking. From the *peculiarity of thought* and *expression* which belongs to every writer, there is a certain character imprinted on his style, which may be denominated *his manner;* commonly expressed by such general terms as *strong, weak, dry, simple, affected,* or the like.

Illus. These distinctions carry, in general, some reference to an author's manner of thinking, but refer chiefly to his mode of expression. They arise from the whole tenor of his language; and comprehend the effect produced by all those parts of style which we have already considered; the choice which he makes of single words; his arrangement of these in sentences; the degree of h isprecision; his embellishment, by means of musical cadence, figures, or other arts of speech; and, finally, the cultivation of his genius and taste. Of such general characters of style, therefore, it remains now to speak, as the result of those elementary parts of which we have hitherto treated.

433. That different subjects require to be treated of, in different sorts of style, is a position so obvious, that it needs no illustration. Every one sees that treatises of philosophy, for instance, ought not to be composed in the same style with orations. Every one sees also, that different parts of the same composition require a variation in the style and manner. In a sermon, or any harangue, as shall be shewn hereafter, the application or peroration admits more ornament, and requires more warmth, than the didactic part.

Obs. But what we mean at present to remark is, that, amidst this variety, we still expect to find, in the compositions of any one man, some

degree of uniformity or consistency with himself in manner; we expect to find impressed on all his writings, some predominant character of style which shall be suited to his particular genius, and shall mark the turn of his mind.

Example. The orations in Livy differ much in style, as they ought to do, from the rest of his history. The same is the case with those in Tacitus. Yet both in Livy's orations, and in those of Tacitus, we are able clearly to trace the distinguishing manner of each historian; the magnificent fullness of the one, and the sententious conciseness of the other.

Corol. Wherever there is real and native genius, it gives a determination to one kind of style rather than another. Where nothing of this appears; where there is no marked nor peculiar character in the compositions of any author, we are apt to infer, and not without reason, that he is a vulgar and trivial author, who writes from imitation, and not from the impulse of original genius. As the most celebrated painters are known by their hand, so the best and most original writers are known and distinguished, throughout all their works, by their style and peculiar manner. This will be found to hold almost without exception.

434. One of the first and most obvious distinctions of the different kinds of style, is what arises from an author's spreading out his thoughts more or less. This distinction forms what are called, the *diffuse* and the *concise styles.*

Illus. 1. A *concise writer* compresses his thoughts into the fewest possible words; he seeks to employ none but such as are most expressive; he lops off, as redundant, every expression which does not add something material to the sense.

Ornament he does not reject; he may be lively and figured; but his ornament is intended for the sake of force rather than grace.

He never gives you the same thought twice. He places it in the light which appears to him the most striking; but if you do not apprehend it well in that light, you need not expect to find it in any other.

His sentences are arranged with compactness and strength, rather than with cadence and harmony. The utmost precision is studied in them; and they are commonly designed to suggest more to the reader's imagination than they directly express.

Illus. 2. A *diffuse* writer unfolds his thought fully. He places it in a variety of lights, and gives the reader every possible assistance for understanding it completely. He is not very careful to express it at first in its full strength; because he is to repeat the impression; and what he wants in strength he proposes to supply by copiousness.

Writers of this character generally love magnificence and amplification. Their periods naturally run out into some length, and having room for ornament of every kind, they admit it freely.

Scholium. Each of these manners has its peculiar advantages; and each becomes faulty when carried to the extreme. The extreme of conciseness becomes abrupt and obscure; it is apt also to lead into a style too pointed, and bordering on the epigrammatic. The extreme of diffuseness becomes weak and languid, and tires the reader. However, to one or other of these two manners, a writer may lean according as his genius prompts him: and under the general character of a concise, or of a more open and diffuse style, he may possess much beauty in his composition.

435. For illustrations of these general characters, we can only refer to the writers who are examples of them. It is not so much from detached passages, such as we have been quoting as *examples* in the foregoing pages of this grammar, as from the current of an author's style, that we are to collect the idea of a formed manner of writing.

Illus. 1. Two of the most remarkable examples of conciseness, carried as far as propriety will allow, perhaps in some cases farther, are Tacitus, the Historian, and the President Montesquieu in "L'Esprit de Loix." Aristotle, too, holds an eminent rank among didactic writers for his brevity. Perhaps no writer in the world was ever so frugal of his words as Aristotle; but this frugality of expression frequently darkens his meaning.

2. Of a beautiful and magnificent diffuseness, Cicero is, beyond doubt, the most illustrious instance that can be given. Addison, also, and Sir William Temple come, in some degree, under this class.

436. In judging when it is proper to lean to the concise, and when to the diffuse manner, we must be directed by the nature of the composition. Discourses that are to be spoken require a more copious style than books that are to be read.

Illus. When the whole meaning must be caught from the mouth of the speaker, without the advantage which books afford of pausing at pleasure, and reviewing what appears obscure, great conciseness is always to be avoided. We should never presume too much on the quickness of our hearer's understanding; but our style ought to be such, that the bulk of men can go along with us easily, and without effort.

Corol. A flowing copious style, therefore, is required in all public speakers; guarding, at the same time, against such a degree of diffusion as renders them languid and tiresome; which will always prove to be the case, when they inculcate too much, and present the same thought under too many different views.

437. In written compositions, a certain degree of conciseness possesses great advantages. It is more lively; keeps up attention; makes a brisker and stronger impression; and gratifies the mind by supplying more exercise to a reader's own thought. A sentiment, which, expressed diffusely, will barely be admitted to be just, will, when expressed consisely, be admired as spirited. Description, when we want to have it vivid and animated, should be in a concise strain.

Illus. 1. This is different from the common opinion; most persons being ready to suppose, that upon description a writer may dwell more safely than upon other topics, and that, by a full and extended style, it is rendered more rich and expressive. On the contrary, a diffuse manner generally weakens description. Any redundant words or circumstances encumber the fancy, and make the object that we present to it, appear confused and indistinct.

2. Accordingly, the most masterly describers, Homer, Tacitus, Milton, are almost always concise in their descriptions. They shew

us more of an object at one glance, than a feeble diffuse writer can shew, by turning it round and exhibiting it in a variety of lights.

Corol. The strength and vivacity of description, whether in prose or poetry, depend much more upon the happy choice of a few striking circumstances, than upon their mutiplicity and variety.

438. Addresses to the passions, likewise, ought to be in the *concise*, rather than the diffuse *manner*. In these it is dangerous to be diffuse, because it is very difficult to support proper warmth for any length of time. When we become prolix, we are always in hazard of cooling the reader. The fancy and the feelings of the heart too, run fast; and if once we can put them in motion, they supply many particulars to greater advantage than an author can display them. The case is different when we address ourselves to the understanding: as for example in all matters of reasoning, explication, and instruction.

Obs. In these cases, that most elegant rhetorician, Dr. Blair, would prefer a more free and diffuse manner. When you are to strike the fancy, or to move the heart, be concise; when you are to inform the understanding, which moves more slowly, and requires the assistance of a guide, it is better to be full. Historical narration may be beautiful, either in a concise or a diffuse manner, according to the writer's genius. Livy and Herodotus are diffuse; Thucydides and Sallust are succinct; yet all of them are agreeable.

439. A *diffuse style* generally abounds in *long periods*; and a *concise writer*, it is certain, will often employ *short sentences*.

Obs. But of long and short sentences, we had occasion, formerly to treat, under the head of "The Construction of Periods." *(See Chapter I. and the Harmony of Periods, Chapter IX. Book III.)*

440. The *nervous* and the *feeble* are generally held to be characters of style, of the same import with the *concise* and the *diffuse*. They do indeed very often coincide. Diffuse writers have, for the most part, some degree of feebleness; and nervous writers will generally be inclined to a concise mode of expression.

Illus. 1. This, however, does not always hold; and there are instances of writers, who, in the midst of a full and ample style, have maintained a great degree of strength. Their style may have many faults. It may be unequal, incorrect, and redundant, but withal, for force and expressiveness, uncommonly distinguished. On every subject, they will multiply words with an overflowing copiousness; but they ever pour forth a torrent of forcible ideas and significant expressions.

2. Indeed, the foundations of a nervous or a weak style are laid in an author's manner of thinking. If he conceives an object vigorously, he will express it with energy: but if he has only an indistinct view of his subject; if his ideas be loose and wavering; if his genius be such, or, at the time of his writing, so carelessly exerted, that he has no firm

hold of the conception which he would communicate to us, the marks of all this will clearly appear in his style. Several unmeaning words and loose epithets will be found in his composition; his expressions will be vague and general; his arrangement indistinct and feeble; we shall conceive a portion of his meaning, but our conception will be faint.

3. Whereas a nervous writer, whether he employs an extended or a concise style, gives us always a strong impression of his meaning; his mind is full of his subject, and his words are all expressive; every phrase and every figure which he uses, tends to render the picture, which he would set before us, more lively and complete.

441. Under the head of *diffuse* and *concise style, (Art.* 436. *and* 437.) we have shewn that an author might lean either to the one or to the other, and yet be beautiful. This is not the case with respect to the nervous and the feeble. Every author, in every composition, ought to study to express himself with some strength, and in proportion as he approaches to the feeble, he becomes a bad writer.

Obs. In all kinds of writing, however, the same degree of strength is not demanded. But the more grave and weighty any composition is, the more should a character of strength predominate in the style.

Corol. Hence, in history, philosophy, and solemn discourses, it is chiefly expected. One of the most complete models of a nervous style, is Demosthenes in his orations.

442. Every good quality in style, when pursued too far, has an extreme, to which it becomes faulty, and this holds of the nervous style as well as of other styles. Too great a study of strength, to the neglect of other qualities of style, is found to betray writers into a harsh manner.

Illus. Harshness arises from unusual words, from forced inversions in the construction of a sentence, and too much neglect of smoothness and ease. This is reckoned the fault of some of our earliest classics in the English language; writers who, from the nerves and strength which they have displayed, are, to this day, eminent for that quality in style. But the language in their hands was exceedingly different from what it is now, and was indeed entirely formed upon the idiom and construction of the Latin, in the arrangement of sentences. The present form which the language has assumed, has, in some measure, sacrificed the study of strength to that of perspicuity and ease. Our arrangement of words has become less forcible, perhaps, but more plain and natural: and this is now understood to be the genius of our language.

443. The restoration of King Charles II. seems to be the æra of the formation of our present style. Lord Clarendon was one of the first who laid aside those frequent inversions which prevailed among writers of the former age. After him, Sir William Temple polished the language still more. But Dryden is the author, who, by the number and reputation of his works, formed it more than any of his predecessors or contemporaries, into its present state.

Illus. 1. Dryden began to write at the Restoration, and continued long an author both in poetry and prose. He had made the language his study; and though he wrote hastily, and often incorrectly, though his style is not free from faults, yet there is a richness in his diction, a copiousness, ease, and variety in his expression, which has not been surpassed by any who have come after him *

2. Since his time, considerable attention has been paid to purity and elegance of style; but it is elegance rather than strength, that forms the distinguishing quality of most of the good English writers. Some of them compose in a more manly and nervous manner than others; but, whether it be from the genius of our language, or from whatever other cause, it appears, that we are far from the strength of several of the Greek and Roman authors.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE DRY, PLAIN, NEAT, ELEGANT, AND FLOWERY STYLE.

444. HITHERTO we have considered style under those characters that respect its *expressiveness* of an author's meaning. Let us now proceed to consider it in another view, with respect to the degree of ornament employed to beautify it. Here, the style of different authors seems to rise, in the following gradation: a DRY, a PLAIN, a NEAT, an ELEGANT, and a FLOWERY manner. Of each of these in its order.

445. First, a DRY MANNER. This excludes ornament of every kind. Content with being understood, it has not the least aim to please, either the fancy or the ear. This is tolerable only in pure didactic writing; and even there, to make us bear it, great weight and solidity of matter are requisite; and entire perspicuity of language.

Illus. 1. Aristotle is the most complete example of a dry style. Never, perhaps, was there any author who adhered so rigidly to the strictness of a didactic manner throughout all his writings, and conveyed so much instruction, without the least approach to ornament. With the most profound genius and extensive views, *he writes*, says Dr. Blair, *like a pure intelligence*, who addresses himself solely to the understanding, without making any use of the channel of the imagination.

2. But this is a manner which deserves not to be imitated. For, al-

* Dr. Johnson, in his life of Dryden, gives the following character of his prose style: "His prefaces have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid, the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is splendid. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though, since his earlier works, more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete."

though the goodness of the matter may compensate the dryness or harshness of the style, yet is that dryness a considerable defect; as it fatigues attention, and conveys our sentiments, with disadvantage, to the reader or hearer.

446. A PLAIN STYLE rises one degree above a dry style. A writer of this character employs very little ornament of any kind, and rests almost entirely upon his sense. But, if he is at no pains to engage us by the employment of figures, musical arrangement, or any other art of writing, he studies, however, to avoid disgusting us like a dry and a harsh writer. Besides perspicuity, he pursues propriety, purity, and precision, in his language; which form one degree, and no inconsiderable one, of beauty. Liveliness too, and force, may be consistent with a very plain style: and therefore, such an author, if his sentiments be good, may be abundantly agreeable.

Obs. The difference between a dry and plain writer, is, that the former is incapable of ornament, and seems not to know what it is; the latter seeks not after it. He gives us his meaning in good language, distinct and pure; he gives himself no farther trouble about ornament; either, because he thinks it unnecessary to his subject; or because his genius does not lead him to delight in it; or, because it leads him to despise it.

447. What is called a NEAT STYLE comes next in order; and here we have arrived in the region of ornament; but that ornament not of the highest or most sparkling kind.

Illus. 1. A writer of this character shews, that he does not despise the beauty of language. It is an object of his attention. But his attention is shewn in the choice of words, and in a graceful collocation of them; rather than in any high efforts of imagination, or eloquence.

2. His sentences are always clean, and free from the incumbrance of superfluous words; of a moderate length; rather inclining to brevity, than a swelling structure; closing with propriety; without any appendages, or adjections dragging after the proper close.

3. His cadence is varied; but not of the studied musical kind.

4. His figures, if he uses any, are short and correct; rather than bold and glowing.

Scholia 1. Such a style as this may be attained by a writer who has no great powers of fancy or genius; merely by industry and careful attention to the rules of writing, and it is a style always agreeable.

2. It imprints a character of moderate elevation on our composition, and carries a decent degree of ornament, which is not unsuitable to any subject whatever.

3. A familiar letter, or a law paper, on the dryest subject, may be written with neatness; and a sermon or a philosophical treatise, in a neat style, will be read with pleasure.

448. An ELEGANT STYLE is a character expressing a higher degree of ornament than a neat one; and, indeed, is the

term usually applied to style, when possessing all the virtues of ornament, without any of its excesses or defects.

Illus. 1. From what has been formerly delivered, it will easily be understood, that complete elegance implies great perspicuity and propriety; purity in the choice of words, and care and dexterity in their harmonious and happy arrangement. It implies, farther, the grace and beauty of imagination spread over style, as far as the subject admits display; and all the illustration which figurative language adds, when properly employed.

2. In a word, an elegant writer is one who pleases the fancy and the ear, while he informs the understanding; and who gives us his ideas clothed with all the beauty of expression, but not overcharged with any of its misplaced finery.*

449. When the ornaments, applied to a style, are too rich and gaudy in proportion to the subject; when they return upon us too fast, and strike us either with a dazzling lustre, or a false brilliancy, this forms what is called a FLORID STYLE; a term commonly used to signify the excess of ornament.

Obs. In a young composer this is very pardonable. Perhaps it is even a promising symptom in young people, that their style should incline to the florid and luxuriant. Much of it will be diminished by years; much will be corrected by ripening judgment; some of it, by the mere practice of composition, will be worn away. Let there be, at first, only sufficient matter that can bear some pruning and lopping off. At this time of life, let genius be bold and inventive, and pride itself in its efforts, though these should not, as yet, be correct. Luxuriancy can easily be cured; but for barrenness there is no remedy.†

450. But, although the *florid style* may be allowed to youth, in their first essays, it must not receive the same indulgence from writers of maturer years. It is to be expected, that judgment, as it ripens, should chasten imagination, and reject, as juvenile, all such ornaments as are redundant, unsuitable to the subject, or not conducive to its illustration.

Obs. 1. Nothing can be more contemptible than that tinsel splendour of language, which some writers perpetually affect. It were well, if this could be ascribed to the real overflowing of a rich imagination. We should then have something to amuse us, at least, if we found little to instruct us. But the worst is, that with those frothy writers, it is a luxuriancy of words, not of fancy.

2. We see a laboured attempt in these writers, to rise to a splendour of composition, of which they have formed to themselves some

* In this class, therefore, we place only the first-rate writers in the language; such as Addison, Dryden, Pope, Temple, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, Campbell, Kames, Dr. Blair, Dougald Stewart, and a few more: writers who differ widely from one another in many of the attributes of style, but whom we now class together under the denomination of elegant, as, in the scale of ornament, possessing nearly the same place.

† Multum inde decoquent anni, multum ratio limabit, aliquid velut usu ipso detereter; sit modo unde excidi possit quid et exsculpi. Audeat hæc ætas plura, et inveniat et inventis gaudeat; sint licet illa non satis interim sicca et severa. Facile remedium est ubertatis; sterilia nullo labore vincuntur.—Quinctilian.

loose idea; but having no strength of genius for attaining it, they endeavour to supply the defect by poetical words, by cold exclamations, by common-place figures, and every thing that has the appearance of pomp and magnificence.

3. It has escaped these writers, that sobriety in ornament is one great secret for rendering it pleasing; and that, without a foundation of good sense and solid thought, the most florid style is but a childish imposition on the public. The public, however, are but too apt to be so imposed on; at least the *mob of readers*, who are very ready to be caught, at first, with whatever is dazzling and gaudy, whether it be served up in the shape of two-pennies' worth of politics, or crude and infectious romances at a heavier charge.

CHAPTER III.

THE SIMPLE, AFFECTED, AND VEHEMENT STYLES.

451. WE are now to treat of style under another character, one of great importance in writing, and which requires to be accurately examined; that of *simplicity*, or a *natural style*, as distinguished from *affectation*.

Obs. Simplicity, applied to writing, is a term very frequently used; but like many other critical terms, often used loosely and without precision. This has been owing chiefly to the different meanings given to the word simplicity, which, therefore, it will be necessary here to distinguish; and to shew in what sense it is a proper attribute of style. We may remark four different acceptations in which it is taken.

452. The first is, *simplicity of composition*, as opposed to too great a variety of parts. Horace's precept refers to this:

Denique sit quod vis simplex duntaxat et unum *

Illus. This is the *simplicity of plan* in a tragedy, as distinguished from *double plots*, and crowded incidents; the *simplicity* of the Iliad, or Æneid, in opposition to the *digressions* of Lucan, and the *scattered tales* of Ariosto; the *simplicity* of *Grecian* architecture, in opposition to the *irregular* variety of the *Gothic*. In this sense, simplicity is the same with unity. (*Art.* 154.)

453. The second sense is, *simplicity of thought*, as opposed to refinement. Simple thoughts are what arise naturally; what the occasion or the subject suggest unsought; and what, when once suggested, are easily apprehended by all. Refinement in writing, expresses a less natural and obvious train of thought, and which it requires a peculiar turn of genius to pursue; within certain bounds, very beautiful;

* "Then learn the wand'ring humour to controul,
And keep one equal tenor through the whole."

but when carried too far, approaching to intricacy, and hurting us by the appearance of being far-sought.

Illus. Thus, we would naturally say, that Parnell is a poet of far greater simplicity, in his turn of thought, than Cowley; Cicero's thoughts on moral subjects are natural; Seneca's, too refined and laboured. In these two senses of simplicity, when it is opposed, either to variety of parts, or to refinement of thought, it has no proper relation to style.

454. There is a third sense of simplicity, in which it has respect to style; and stands opposed to too much ornament, or pomp of language.

Illus. When we say Locke is a simple, and Harvey is a florid writer; it is in this sense, that the "*simplex*," the "*tenue*," or "*subtile genus dicendi*," as understood by Cicero and Quinctilian, are applicable.

2. The simple style, in this sense, coincides with the plain or the neat style, (*Art.* 446. *and* 447.) and, therefore, requires no farther illustration.

455. But there is a fourth sense of simplicity, also, respecting style; but not respecting the degree of ornament employed, so much as the easy and natural manner in which our language expresses our thoughts. This is quite different from the former sense of the word just now mentioned, in which simplicity was equivalent to plainness: whereas, in this sense, it is compatible with the highest ornament.

Illus. Homer, for instance, possesses this simplicity in the greatest perfection; and yet no writer has more ornament and beauty. This simplicity, which is what we are now to consider, stands opposed, not to ornament, but to affectation of ornament, or appearance of labour about our style; and it is a distinguishing excellency in writing.

456. A writer of simplicity expresses himself in such a manner, that every one thinks he could have written in the same way; Horace describes it,

> - - - - - ut sibi quivis
> Speret idem, sudet multum, frustraque laboret
> Ausus idem.*

Illus. 1. There are no marks of art in his expression; it seems the very language of nature; you see in the style, not the writer and his labour, but the man in his own natural character. (*Art.* 181. *Illus.*) He may be rich in his expression; he may be full of figures, and of fancy; but these flow from him without effort; and he appears to write in this manner, not because he has studied it, but because it is the manner of expression most natural to him.

2. A certain degree of negligence, also, is not inconsistent with this character of style, and even not ungraceful in it; for too minute an attention to words is foreign to it: let this style have a certain softness and ease, which shall characterise a negligence, not unpleasing in an

* "From well-known tales such fictions would I raise,
As all might hope to imitate with ease;
Yet, while they strive the same success to gain,
Should find their labours and their hopes in vain." Francis.

author, who appears to be more solicitous about the thought than the expression*.

3. This is the great advantage of simplicity of style, that, like simplicity of manners, it shews us a man's sentiments and turn of mind laid open without disguise. More studied and artificial manners of writing, however beautiful, have always this disadvantage, that they exhibit an author in form, like a man at court, where the splendour of dress, and the ceremoniousness of behaviour, conceal those peculiarities which distinguish one man from another. But reading an author of simplicity, is like conversing with a person of distinction at home, and with ease, where we find natural manners, and a marked character.

457. The highest degree of this simplicity is expressed by the French term *naivete*, to which we have none that fully answers in our language. It is not easy to give a precise idea of the import of this word. It always expresses a discovery of character.

Illus. 1. Perhaps the best account of it, is that given by Marmontel, who explains it thus: that sort of amiable ingenuity, or undisguised openness, which seems to give us some degree of superiority over the person who shews it; a certain infantine simplicity, which we love in our hearts, but which displays some features of the character that we think we could have art enough to hide; and which, therefore, always leads us to smile at the person who discovers this character.

2. La Fontaine, in his Fables, may be given as a great example of such *naivete*. This, however, is to be understood, as descriptive of a particular species only of simplicity.

458. With respect to simplicity, in general, we may remark, that the ancient original writers are always the most eminent for it. This happens from a plain reason, that they wrote from the dictates of natural genius, and were not formed upon the labours and writings of others, which is always in hazard of producing affectation.

Corol. Hence, among the Greek writers, we have more models of a beautiful simplicity, than among the Roman. Homer, Hesiod, Anacreon, Theocritus, Herodotus, and Xenophon, are all distinguished for their simplicity. Among the Romans also, we have some writers of this character, particularly Terence, Lucretius, Phædrus, and Julius Cæsar.

459. Simplicity is the great beauty of Archbishop Tillotson's manner. Tillotson has long been admired as an eloquent writer, and a model for preaching. But his eloquence, if we can call it such, has been often misunderstood. For, if we include, in the idea of eloquence, vehemence and strength, picturesque description, glowing figures, or correct arrangement of sentences, in all these parts of oratory the Archbishop is exceedingly deficient. *(Dr. Blair.)*

* "Habet ille, molle quiddam, et quod indiee non ingratam negligentiam hominis, de re magis quam de verbo laborantis." Cicero de Orat.

Obs. His style is always pure, indeed, and perspicuous, but careless and remiss, too often feeble and languid; little beauty in the construction of his sentences, which are frequently suffered to drag unharmoniously: seldom any attempt towards strength or sublimity. But, notwithstanding these defects, such a constant vein of good sense and piety runs through his works, such an earnest and serious manner, and so much useful instruction conveyed in a style so pure, natural, and unaffected, as will justly recommend him to high regard, as long as the English language shall remain; not, indeed, as a model of the highest eloquence, but as a simple and amiable writer, whose manner is strongly expressive of great goodness and worth. *(Illus.* 8. *Art.* 222.)

460. Sir William Temple is another remarkable writer in the style of simplicity. In point of ornament and correctness he rises a degree above Tillotson; though, for correctness, he is not in the highest rank. All is easy and flowing in him; he is exceedingly harmonious; smoothness, and what may be called amenity, are the distinguishing characters of his manner; relaxing sometimes, as such a manner will naturally do, into a prolix and remiss style.

Obs. No writer whatever has stamped upon his style a more lively impression of his own character. In reading his works, we seem engaged in conversation with him; we become thoroughly acquainted with him, not merely as an author, but as a man; and contract a friendship for him. He may be classed as standing in the middle, between a negligent simplicity, and the highest degree of ornament which this character of style admits. *(See Ex.* 2. *and Analysis, Art.* 217.)

461. Addison is, beyond doubt, in the English language, the most perfect example of the highest, most correct, and ornamental degree of the simple manner: and, therefore, though not without some faults, he is, on the whole, the safest model for imitation, and the freest from considerable defects, which the language affords.

Obs. 1. Perspicuous and pure he is in the highest degree; his precision, indeed, not very great; yet nearly as great as the subjects, which he treats of, require: the construction of his sentences easy, agreeable, and commonly very musical; carrying a character of smoothness, more than of strength.

2. In figurative language, he is rich: particularly in similes and metaphors; which are so employed as to render his style splendid, without being gaudy. There is not the least affectation in his manner: we see no marks of labour; nothing forced or constrained; but great elegance, joined with great ease and simplicity.

3. He is, in particular, distinguished by a character of modesty, and of politeness, which appears in all his writings. No author has a more popular and insinuating manner; and the great regard which he every where shews for virtue and religion, recommends his Spectator very highly.

4. If he fails in any thing, it is in want of strength and precision, which renders his manner, though perfectly suited to such essays as he writes in the Spectator, not altogether a proper model for any of the

higher and more elaborate kinds of composition. Though the public have ever done much justice to his merit, yet the nature of his merit has not always been seen in its true light; for, though his poetry be elegant, he certainly bears a higher rank among the prose writers, than he is entitled to among the poets; and, in prose, his humour is of a much higher and more original strain, than his philosophy. The character of Sir Roger de Coverly discovers more genius than the critique on Milton. (*See Illus.* 8. *Art.* 222. *and Art.* 272. *Crit.* 4.)

462. Such authors as those, whose characters we have been giving, one is never tired of reading. There is nothing in their manner that strains or fatigues our thoughts; we are pleased, without being dazzled by their lustre. So powerful is the charm of simplicity in an author of real genius, that it atones for many defects, and reconciles us to many a careless expression.

Corol. 1. Hence in all the most excellent authors, both in prose and verse, the simple and natural manner may be always remarked; although other beauties being predominant, this forms not their peculiar and distinguishing character.

2. Thus Milton is simple in the midst of all his grandeur; and Demosthenes, in the midst of all his vehemence. (*Illus.* 2. *and Analysis. Art.* 212.)

Obs. To grave and solemn writings, simplicity of manner adds the more venerable air. Accordingly, this has often been remarked as the prevailing character throughout all the sacred Scriptures; and indeed no other character of style was so much suited to their dignity.

463. Of authors, who, notwithstanding many excellencies, have rendered their style much less beautiful by want of simplicity, Lord Shaftsbury furnishes the most remarkable example. His lordship is an author on whom we have made observations several times before, and we shall now take leave of him, with giving his general character under this head.

Obs. 1. Considerable merit, doubtless, he has. His language has many beauties. It is firm, and supported in an uncommon degree; it is rich and musical. No English author has attended so much to the regular construction of his sentences, both with respect to propriety, and with respect to cadence. (*Illus.* 7. *Art.* 222.) All this gives so much elegance and pomp to his language, that there is no wonder it should have been highly admired by some. It is greatly hurt, however, by perpetual stiffness and affectation. This is its capital fault.

2. Like Dr. Johnson, his lordship can express nothing with simplicity. He seems to have considered it as vulgar, and beneath the dignity of a man of quality, to speak like other men. Johnson could say nothing but as a lexicographer. Lord Shaftsbury is ever in buskins; and dressed out with magnificent elegance. Johnson is clad in the leaves of his dictionary; he lived upon it, as Boniface did upon his ale. In every sentence of Lord Shaftsbury, we see the marks of labour and art; nothing of that ease, which expresses a sentiment coming natural and warm from the heart. Johnson is a perfect mechanist

of style. Having once studied him, you will know his style among a thousand; so exactly do the counters he presents to you, correspond with the Roman die, whence they were turned out. Of figures and ornaments of every kind, Lord Shaftsbury is exceedingly fond; sometimes happy in them; but his fondness for them is too visible; and, having once laid hold of some metaphor or allusion that pleases him, he knows not how to part with it. The coldness of Johnson's heart, did not allow him to indulge at pleasure in figures and ornament. His figures are always correct, but artificial and stately; and his allegories, in the Rambler, are awkwardly classical, though some of them are not deficient in wit and elegance. His Allegory of Criticism, an early paper in the Rambler, is a pertinent illustration.

464. Having now said so much to recommend simplicity, or the easy and natural manner of writing, and having pointed out the defects of an opposite manner; in order to prevent mistakes on this subject, it is necessary to observe, that it is very possible for an author to write simply and yet not beautifully. One may be free from affectation, and not have merit.

Illus. 1. The beautiful simplicity supposes an author to possess real genius; to write with solidity, purity, and liveliness of imagination. In this case, the simplicity or unaffectedness of his manner, is the crowning ornament; it heightens every other beauty; it is the dress of nature, without which all beauties are imperfect.

2. But if mere unaffectedness were sufficient to constitute the beauty of style, weak, trifling, and dull writers might often lay claim to this beauty. And, accordingly, we frequently meet with pretended critics, who extol the dullest writers, on account of what they call the "chaste simplicity of their manner;" which, in truth, is no other than the absence of every ornament, through the mere want of genius and imagination.

3. We must distinguish, therefore, between that simplicity which accompanies true genius, and which is perfectly compatible with every proper ornament of style, and that which is no other than a careless and slovenly manner. Indeed the distinction is easily made from the effect produced. The one never fails to interest the reader; the other is insipid and tiresome.

465. We proceed to mention one other manner or character of style different from any that has yet been spoken of; and which may be distinguished by the name of the *vehement*. This always implies strength; and is not, by any means, inconsistent with simplicity; but, in its predominant character, it is distinguishable from either the strong or the simple manner.

Illus. It has a peculiar ardour; it is a glowing style; the language of a man, whose imagination and passions are heated, and strongly affected by what he writes; who is therefore negligent of minor graces, but pours himself forth with the rapidity and fulness of a torrent. It belongs to the higher kinds of oratory; and, indeed, is rather expected from a man who is speaking, than from one who is writing in his

closet. The orations of Demosthenes furnish the full and perfect example of this species of style.

466. Among English writers, the one who has most of this character, though mixed, indeed, with several defects, is Lord Bolingbroke. His lordship was formed by nature to be a factious leader; the demagogue of a popular assembly. Accordingly the style that runs through all his political writings, is that of one declaiming with heat, rather than writing with deliberation.

Illus. He abounds in rhetorical figures; and pours himself forth with great impetuosity. He is copious to a fault; places the same thought before us in many different views; but generally with life and ardour. He is bold, rather than correct; a torrent that flows strong, but often muddy. His sentences are varied as to length and shortness; inclining, however, most to long periods, sometimes including parentheses, and frequently crowding and heaping a multitude of things upon one another, as naturally happens in the warmth of speaking. In the choice of his words, there is great felicity and precision. In exact construction of sentences, he is much inferior to Lord Shaftsbury; but greatly superior to him in life and ease. Upon the whole, his merit, as a writer, would have been very considerable, if his matter had equalled his style. But whilst we find many things to commend in the latter, in the former, as we before remarked, we can hardly find any thing to commend. In his reasonings, for the most part, he is flimsy and false; in his political writings, factious; in what he calls his philosophical ones, sophistical in the highest degree.

467. Some other characters of style, beside those which we have mentioned, might be pointed out; but it is very difficult to separate such general considerations of the style of authors from their peculiar turn of sentiment, which it is not the business of this work to criticise.

Illus. Conceited writers, for instance, discover their spirit so much in their composition, that it imprints on their style a character of pertness; though it is difficult to say, whether this can be classed among the attributes of style, or is rather to be ascribed entirely to the thought. In whatever class we rank it, all appearances of it ought to be avoided with care, as a most disgusting blemish in writing. Under general heads, it is no difficult task to classify the character of many of the eminent writers in the English language.

Scholia. From what has been said on this subject, it may be inferred, that to determine among all these different manners of writing, what is precisely the best, is neither easy not necessary. Style is a field that admits of great latitude. Its qualities in different authors may be very different; and yet in them all, beautiful. Room must be left here for genius; for that particular determination which one receives from nature to one manner of expression more than another.

2. Some general qualities, indeed, there are of such importance, as should always, in every kind of composition, be kept in view; and some defects we should always study to avoid.

3. An ostentatious, a feeble, a harsh, or an obscure style, for instance, is always faulty; and perspicuity, strength, neatness, and

simplicity, are beauties to be always aimed at. But as to the mixture of all, or the degree of predominancy of any one of these good qualities, for forming our peculiar distinguishing manner, no precise rules can be given; nor would it be prudent to point out any one model as absolutely perfect.

4. It will be more to the purpose, that we conclude these dissertations upon style, with a few directions concerning the proper method of attaining a good style, in general; leaving the particular character of that style to be either formed by the subject on which we write, or prompted by the bent of genius.

CHAPTER IV.

DIRECTIONS FOR FORMING STYLE.

468. THE first direction which we give for this purpose, is, to study *clear ideas* on the subject concerning which you are to write or speak. This is a direction which may at first appear to have small relation to style. Its relation to it, however, is extremely close. The foundation of all good style, is *good sense*, accompanied with a *lively imagination*.

Illus. 1. The style and thoughts of a writer are so intimately connected, that it is frequently hard to distinguish them. (*Art.* 332.) Whenever the impressions of things upon our minds are faint and indistinct, or perplexed and confused, our style in treating of such things will infallibly be so too. Whereas, what we conceive clearly and feel strongly, we shall naturally express with clearness and with strength. (*Illus. Art.* 465.)

2. This, then, we may be assured, is a capital rule as to style, to think closely on the subject, till we have attained a full and distinct view of the matter which we are to clothe in words, till we become warm and interested in it; then, and not till then, shall we find expression begin to flow.

3. Generally speaking, the best and most proper expressions are those which a clear view of the subject suggests, without much labour or inquiry after them. This is Quinctilian's observation: the most proper words for the most part adhere to the thoughts which are to be expressed by them, and may be discovered as by their own light. But we hunt after them as if they were hidden, and only to be found in a corner. Hence, instead of conceiving the words to lie near the subject, we go in quest of them to some other quarter, and endeavour to give force to the expressions we have found out.*

469. In the second place, in order to form a good style, the *frequent practice of composing* is indispensably necessa-

* Plerumque optima verba rebus cohærent, et cernuntur suo lumine. At nos quærimus illa, tanquam lateant seque subducant. Ita nunquam putamus verba esse circa id de quo dicendum est; sed ex aliis locis petimus, et inventus vim afferimus. Lib. viii. c. 1.

ry. We have delivered many rules concerning style; but no rules will answer the end, without exercise and habit. At the same time, it is not every sort of composing that will improve style.

Illus. This is so far from being the case, that by frequent, careless, and hasty composition, we shall certainly acquire a very bad style; we shall have more trouble afterwards in unlearning faults, and correcting negligences, than if we had not been accustomed to composition at all. In the beginning, therefore, we ought to write slowly, and with much care. Let the facility and speed of writing be the fruit of longer practice. "I enjoin," says Quinctilian, "that such as are beginning the practice of composition, write slowly and with anxious deliberation. Their great object at first should be, to write as well as possible; practice will enable them to write speedily. By degrees, matter will offer itself still more readily; words will be at hand; composition will flow; every thing, as in the arrangement of a well-ordered family, will present itself in its proper place. The sum of the whole is this: by hasty composition, we shall never acquire the art of composing well; by writing well, we shall come to write speedily."*

470. We must observe, however, that there may be an extreme, in too great and anxious care about words. We must not retard the course of thought, nor cool the heat of imagination, by pausing too long on every word we employ. There is, on certain occasions, a glow of composition, which should be kept up, if we hope to express ourselves happily, though at the expense of allowing some inadvertencies to pass. A more severe examination of these must be left for the work of correction. For, if the practice of composition be useful, the laborious work of correcting is no less so; it is indeed absolutely necessary to our reaping any benefit from the habit of composition.

Obs. 1. What we have written should be laid by for some little time, till the ardour of composition be past, till the fondness for the expressions which we have used be worn off, and the expressions themselves be forgotten; and then reviewing our work with a cool and critical eye, as if it were the performance of another, we shall discern many imperfections which at first escaped us.

2. Then is the season for pruning redundancies; for examining the arrangement of sentences; for attending to the juncture of the particles connecting the whole; and bringing style into a regular, correct, and supported form.

3. This "labour at the beginning," must be submitted to by all who would communicate their thoughts with proper advantage to others; and some practice in it will soon sharpen their eye to the most necessary objects of attention, and render it a much more easy and practicable work than might at first be imagined.

* "Moram et solicitudinem, initiis impero. Nam primum hoc constituendum ac obtinendum est, ut quam optime scribamus: celeritatem dabit consuetudo. Paulatim res facilius se ostendent, verba respondebunt, compositio prosequetur. Cuncta denique ut in familiâ bene institutâ in officio erunt. Summa hæc est rei; cito scribendo non fit ut bene scribatur; bene scribendo, sit ut cito." l. x. c. 3.

471. In the third place, with respect to the assistance that is to be gained from the writings of others, it is obvious, that we ought to render ourselves well acquainted with the style of the best authors. This is requisite, both in order to form a just taste in style, and to supply us with a full stock of words on every subject.

Obs. 1. In reading authors with a view to style, attention should be given to the peculiarities of their different manners; and in this Grammar we have endeavoured to suggest several things that may be useful in this view. Dr. Blair says, no exercise will be found more useful for acquiring a proper style, than to translate some passage from an eminent English author into our own words.

2. What he means is, to take, for instance, some page of one of Addison's Spectators, and read it carefully over two or three times, till we have got a firm hold of the thoughts contained in it; then to lay aside the book; to attempt to write out the passage from memory, in the best way we can; and having done so, next to open the book, and compare what we have written, with the style of the author.

3. Such an exercise will, by comparison, shew us where the defects of our style lie; it will lead us to the proper attentions for rectifying them; and among the different ways in which the same thought may be expressed, it will make us perceive that which is the most beautiful.

472. In the fourth place, guard yourself, at the same time, against a servile imitation of any author whatever. This is always dangerous. It hampers genius; it is likely to produce a stiff manner; and those who are given to close imitation, generally imitate an author's faults, as well as his beauties. No man will ever become a good writer or speaker, who has not some degree of confidence to follow his own genius.

Obs. You ought to beware, in particular, of adopting any author's noted phrases, or transcribing passages from him. Such a habit will prove fatal to all genuine composition. Infinitely better it is to have something that is your own, though of moderate beauty, than to affect to shine in borrowed ornaments, which will, at last, betray the utter poverty of your genius. On these heads of composing, correcting, reading, and imitating, every student of oratory should consult what Quinctilian has delivered in the tenth book of his Institutions, where will be found a variety of excellent observations and directions, that well deserve attention.

473. In the fifth place, it is an obvious, but material rule, with respect to style, that you always study to adapt it to the subject, and also to the capacity of your hearers, if you are to speak in public. Nothing merits the name of eloquent or beautiful, which is not suited to the occasion, and to the persons to whom it is addressed. It is to the last degree awkward and absurd, to attempt a poetical florid style, on occasions when it should be your business only to argue and rea-

son; or to speak with elaborate pomp of expression, before persons who comprehend nothing of it, and who can only stare at your unseasonable magnificence. These are defects not so much in point of style, as, what is much worse, in point of common sense.

Obs. When you begin to write or speak, you ought previously to fix in your minds a clear conception of the end to be aimed at; to keep this steadily in your view, and to suit your style to it. If you do not sacrifice to this great object, every ill-timed ornament that may occur to your fancy, you are unpardonable; and though children and fools may admire, men of sense will laugh at you and your style.

474. In the last place carry along with you this admonition, that, in any case, and on any occasion, attention to style must not engross you so much, as to detract from a higher degree of attention to the thoughts: "to your expression be attentive; but about your matter be solicitous."*

Obs. It is much easier to dress up trivial and common sentiments with some beauty of expression, than to afford a fund of vigorous, ingenious, and useful thoughts. The latter requires true genius; the former may be attained by industry, with the help of very superficial parts. Hence, we find so many writers frivolously rich in style, but wretchedly poor in sentiment. The public ear is now so much accustomed to a correct and ornamented style, that no writer can, with safety, neglect the study of it. But he is a contemptible one, who does not look to something beyond it; who does not lay the chief stress upon his matter, and employ such ornaments of style to recommend it, as are manly, not foppish. "A higher spirit ought to animate those who study eloquence. They ought to consult the health and fondness of the whole body, rather than bend their attention to such trifling objects as paring the nails, and dressing the hair. Let ornament be manly and chaste, without effeminate gaiety, or artificial colouring; let it shine with the glow of health and strength."†

CHAPTER V.

CONDUCT OF A DISCOURSE IN ALL ITS PARTS—INTRODUCTION, DIVISION, NARRATION AND EXPLICATION.

475. ON whatever subject any one intends to discourse, he will most commonly begin with some introduction, in order to prepare the minds of his hearers; he will then state his subject, and explain the facts connected with it; he will

* "Curam verborum, rerum volo esse solicitudinem."

† "Majore animo aggredienda est eloquentia; quæ si toto corpore valet, ungues polire et capillum componere, non existimabit ad curam suam pertinere. Ornatus et virilis et fortis, et sanctus sit; nec effeminatam levitatem, et fuco ementitum colorem amet; sanguine et viribus niteat." Quinctilian.

employ arguments for establishing his own opinion, and overthrowing that of his antagonist: he may perhaps, if there be room for it, endeavour to touch the passions of his audience; and after having said all he thinks proper, he will bring his discourse to a close, by some peroration or conclusion.

476. This being the natural train of speaking, the parts that compose a regular formal oration, are these six:

First, the exordium, or introduction;
Secondly, the statement, and the division of the subject;
Thirdly, the narration, or explication;
Fourthly, the reasoning, or arguments;
Fifthly, the pathetic parts;
And, lastly, the conclusion.

477. The exordium, or introduction, is manifestly common to all kinds of public speaking. It is not a rhetorical invention. It is founded upon nature, and suggested by common sense.

Illus. When one is going to counsel another; when he takes upon him to instruct, or to reprove, prudence will generally direct him not to do it abruptly, but to use some preparation; to begin with some matter that may incline the persons, to whom he addresses himself, to judge favourably of what he is about to say; and may dispose them to such a train of thought, as will forward and assist the purpose which he has in view. This is, or it ought to be, the main scope of an introduction.

478. First, to *conciliate the good-will* of the hearers; to render them benevolent, or well-affected, to the speaker, and to the subject.

Illus. Topics for this purpose may, in causes at the bar, be sometimes taken from the particular situation of the speaker himself, or of his client, or from the character or behaviour of his antagonists, contrasted with his own; on other occasions, from the nature of the subject, as closely connected with the interest of the hearers; and, in general, from the modesty and good intention with which the speaker enters upon his subject.

479. The second end of an introduction, is, to *raise the attention of the hearers;* which may be effected, by giving them some hints of the importance, dignity, or novelty of the subject; or some favourable view of the clearness and precision with which we are to treat it; and of the brevity with which we are to discourse.

480. The third end is, to render the hearers *docile*, or *open to persuasion;* for which end we must begin with studying to remove any particular prepossessions they may have con-

tracted against the cause, or side of the argument, which we espouse.

481. As few parts of the discourse give the composer more trouble, or are attended with more nicety in the execution, we shall here lay down the following rules, for the proper composition of this part of the subject.

482. The first rule is, that the introduction should be *easy* and *natural*. The subject must always suggest it.

Obs. It is too common a fault in introductions, that they are taken from some common-place topic, which has no particular relation to the subject in hand; by which means they stand apart, like pieces detached from the rest of the discourses to which they are prefixed.

483. In order to render introductions natural and easy, it is a good rule, that they should not be planned, till after one has meditated in his own mind the substance of his discourse. Then, and not till then, he should begin to think of some proper and natural introduction.

Obs. By taking a contrary course, and labouring in the first place on an introduction, every one who is accustomed to composition, will often find, that either he is led to lay hold of some common-place topic, or that, instead of the introduction being accommodated to the discourse, he is obliged to accommodate the whole discourse to the introduction which he had previously written.

484. In the second place, in an introduction, *correctness* should be carefully studied in the expression. This is requisite, on account of the situation of the hearers.

Obs. They are then more disposed to criticise than at any other period; they are, as yet, unoccupied with the subject or the arguments; their attention is wholly directed to the speaker's style and manner. Something must be done, therefore, to prepossess them in his favour; though, for the same reasons, too much art must be avoided; for it will be more easily detected at that time than afterwards; and will derogate from persuasion in all that follows.

485. In the third place, *modesty* is another character which it must carry. All appearances of modesty are favourable, and prepossessing. If the orator set out with an air of arrogance and ostentation, the self-love and pride of the hearers will be presently awakened, and they will listen to him with a very suspicious ear throughout all his discourse.

Obs. His modesty should discover itself not only in his expressions at the beginning, but in his whole manner; in his looks, in his gestures, in the tone of his voice. Every auditory take in good part those marks of respect and awe, which are paid to them by one who addresses them. Indeed the modesty of an introduction should never betray any thing mean or abject. It is always of great use to an orator, that, together with modesty and deference to his hearers, he should show a

certain sense of dignity, arising from a persuasion of the justice or importance of the subject on which he is to speak.

486. In the fourth place, an introduction should usually be carried on in the calm manner. This is seldom the place for vehemence and passion. Emotions must rise as the discourse advances. The minds of the hearers must be gradually prepared, before the speaker can venture on strong and passionate sentiments.

Obs. The exceptions to this rule are, when the subject is such, that the very mention of it naturally awakens some passionate emotion; or when the unexpected presence of some person or object, in a popular assembly, inflames the speaker, and makes him break forth with unusual warmth. Either of these will justify what is called the exordium *ab abrupto*.

Example. Thus the appearance of Catiline in the senate renders the vehement beginning of Cicero's first oration against him very natural and proper: "Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra?" And thus Bishop Atterbury, in preaching from this text, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me," ventures on breaking forth with this bold exordium: "And can any man then be offended in thee, blessed Jesus?"

487. In the fifth place, it is a rule in introductions, not to anticipate any material part of the subject.

Obs. When topics, or arguments, which are afterwards to be enlarged upon, are hinted at, and, in part, brought forth in the introduction, they lose the grace of novelty upon their second appearance. The impression intended to be made by any capital thought, is always made with the greatest advantage, when it is made entire, and in its proper place.

488. In the last place, the introduction ought to be proportioned, both in length, and in kind, to the discourse that is to follow: in length, as nothing can be more absurd than to erect a very great portico before a small building; and in kind, as it is no less absurd to overcharge, with superb ornaments, the portico of a plain dwelling-house, or to make the entrance to a monument as gay as that to an arbour. Common sense directs, that every part of a discourse should be suited to the strain and spirit of the whole.

Scholium. These are the principal rules that relate to introductions. They are adapted, in a great measure, to discourses of all kinds. In pleadings at the bar, or speeches in public assemblies, particular care must be taken not to employ such an introduction as the adverse party may lay hold of, and turn to his advantage.

489. After the introduction, what commonly comes next in order, is the *proposition*, or *enunciation* of the subject. Concerning the proposition, it is to be observed, that it should be as clear and distinct as possible, and expressed in few and plain words, without the least affectation.

490. To this, generally succeeds the *division*, or the laying down the method of the discourse; on which it is necessary to make some observations.

Obs. We do not mean, that in every discourse, a formal division or distribution of it into parts, is requisite. There are many occasions of public speaking, when this is neither requisite, nor would be proper; when the discourse, perhaps, is to be short, or only one point is to be treated of; or when the speaker does not choose to warn his hearers of the method he is to follow, or of the conclusion to which he seeks to bring them. Order, of one kind or other, is, indeed, essential to every good discourse; that is, every thing should be so arranged, that what goes before may give light and force to what follows. But this may be accomplished by means of a concealed method. What we call division is, when the method is propounded in form to the hearers. The discourse in which this sort of division most commonly takes place, is a sermon.

491. In a *sermon*, or *pleading*, or any discourse, where division is proper to be used, the most material rules are,

492. First, that the *several parts* into which the subject is divided, be *really distinct* from one another; that is, *that no one include another.*

Obs. It were a very absurd division, for instance, if one should propose to treat first, of the advantages of virtue, and next, of those of justice or temperance; because, the first head evidently comprehends the second, as a genus does the species. He who proceeds in this method involves his subject in disorder and indistinctness.

493. Secondly, in division, we must take care to *follow the order of nature;* beginning with the simplest points, such as are easiest apprehended, and necessary to be first discussed; and proceeding thence to those which are built upon the former, and which suppose them to be known. We must divide the subject into those parts into which it is most easily and naturally resolved; that it may seem to split itself, and not be violently torn asunder: "Dividere," as is commonly said, "non frangere."

494. Thirdly, the several members of a division ought to exhaust the subject; otherwise, we do not make a complete division; we exhibit the subject by pieces and corners only, without giving any such plan as displays the whole.

495. Fourthly, the *terms* in which our partitions are expressed, should be as *concise* as possible. Avoid all circumlocution here. Admit not a single word but what is necessary. Precision is to be studied, above all things, in laying down your method.

Obs. It is this which chiefly makes a division appear neat and elegant; when the several heads are propounded in the clearest, most expressive, and, at the same time, the fewest words possible. This

never fails to strike the hearers agreeably; and is, at the same time, of great consequence towards making the divisions be more easily remembered.

496. Fifthly, avoid an unnecessary multiplication of heads. To split a subject into a great many minute parts, by divisions and subdivisions without end, has always a bad effect in speaking.

Obs. It may be proper in a logical treatise; but it makes an oration appear hard and dry, and unnecessarily fatigues the memory. In a sermon, there may be from three to five or six heads, including subdivisions; seldom should there be more.

497. The next constituent part of a discourse, which we mentioned, was *narration*, or *explication*.

Obs. We put these two together, both because they fall nearly under the same rules, and because they commonly answer the same purpose; serving to illustrate the cause, or the subject of which the orator treats, before he proceeds to argue either on one side or other; or to make any attempt for interesting the passions of the hearers.

Illus. 1. In pleadings at the bar, *narration* is often a very important part of the discourse, and requires to be particularly attended to. Besides its being in no case an easy matter to relate with grace and propriety, there is, in narrations at the bar, a peculiar difficulty. The pleader must say nothing but what is true; and, at the same time, he must avoid saying any thing that will hurt his cause.

2. The facts which he relates, are to be the ground-work of all his future reasoning. To recount them so as to keep strictly within the bounds of truth, and yet to present them under the colours most favourable to his cause; to place, in the most striking light, every circumstance which is to his advantage, and to soften and weaken such as make against him, demand no small exertion of skill and dexterity. He must always remember, that if he discovers too much art, he defeats his own purpose, and creates a distrust of his sincerity.

498. To be *clear* and *distinct*, to be *probable*, and to be *concise*, are the qualities which critics chiefly require in narration; each of which carries, sufficiently, the evidence of its importance.

Illus. 1. *Distinctness* belongs to the whole train of the discourse, but is especially requisite in *narration*, which ought to throw light on all that follows. A fact, or a single circumstance left in obscurity, and misapprehended by the judge, may destroy the effect of all the argument and reasoning which the speaker employs. If his narration be improbable, the judge will not regard it; and if it be tedious and diffuse, he will be tired of it, and forget it.

2. In order to produce *distinctness*, besides the study of the general rules of perspicuity which were formerly given, narration requires particular attention to ascertain clearly the *names*, the *dates*, the *places*, and *every* other material circumstance of the facts recounted.

3. In order to be *probable* in narration, it is material to enter into the *characters* of the *persons* of whom we speak, and to show that their *actions* proceeded from such *motives* as are *natural*, and likely to gain belief.

4. In order to be as *concise* as the subject will admit, it is necessary to *throw out* all *superfluous* circumstances; the rejection of which will likewise tend to make our narration more forcible and more clear.

Obs. In sermons, where there is seldom any occasion for narration, explication of the subject to be discoursed on, comes in the place of narration at the bar, and is to be taken up much on the same tone; that is, it must be concise, clear, and distinct; and in a style correct and elegant, rather than highly adorned. To explain the doctrine of the text with propriety; to give a full and perspicuous account of the nature of that virtue or duty which forms the subject of the discourse, is properly the didactic part of preaching; on the right execution of which much depends for all that comes afterwards in the way of persuasion.

499. Of the *argumentative* or *reasoning part* of a discourse. In whatever place, or on whatever subject one speaks, this, beyond doubt, is of the greatest consequence. For the great end for which men speak on any serious occasion, is to convince their hearers of something being either true, or right, or good; and, by means of this conviction, to influence their practice. Reason and argument make the foundation of all manly and persuasive eloquence.

500. Now, with respect to arguments, three things are requisite.

First, the *invention* of them;

Secondly, the proper disposition and arrangement of them;

And, thirdly, the expressing of them in such a style and manner, as to give them their full force.

501. The first of these, *invention*, is, without doubt, the most material, and the ground-work of the rest.

Obs. 1. But, with respect to this, it is beyond the power of art to give any real assistance. Art cannot go so far, as to supply a speaker with arguments on every cause, and every subject; though it may be of considerable use in assisting him to arrange and express those, which his knowledge of the subject has discovered. For it is one thing to discover the reasons that are most proper to convince men, and another, to manage these reasons with the most advantage. The latter is all that to which rhetoric can pretend.

2. The assistance that can be given, not with respect to the *invention*, but with respect to the *disposition* and *conduct of arguments*, may be reduced to the following methods.

502. Two different methods may be used by orators in the conduct of their reasoning. The terms of art for these methods are, the *analytic*, and the *synthetic* method.

Illus. The *analytic* is that in which the orator conceals his intention concerning the point he is to prove, till he has gradually brought his hearers to the designed conclusion. They are led on, step by step, from one known truth to another, till the conclusion be stolen upon them, as the natural consequence of a chain of propositions.

Example. When one, intending to prove the being of a God, sets out

with observing that *every thing* which we see in the world has *had a beginning;* that *whatever* has had a beginning, must have had a *prior cause;* that in *human* productions, *art* shown in the *effect*, necessarily infers *design* in the *cause:* and proceeds leading you on from *one cause* to *another*, till you arrive at one supreme first cause, from whom are derived all the order and design visible in his works.

Obs. This is much the same with the Socratic method, by which that philosopher silenced the Sophists of his age. It is a very artful method of reasoning; may be carried on with much beauty, and is proper to be used when the hearers are much prejudiced against any truth, and by imperceptible steps must be led to conviction. But there are few subjects that will admit this method, and not many occasions on which it is proper to be employed.

503. The mode of reasoning most generally used, and most suited to the train of popular speaking, is what is called the *synthetic;* when the point to be proved is fairly laid down, and one argument after another is made to bear upon it, till the hearers be fully convinced.

Illus. Now, in all arguing, one of the first things to be attended to, is, among the various arguments which may occur upon a cause, to make a proper selection of such as appear to one's self the most solid; and to employ these as the chief means of persuasion. Every speaker should place himself in the situation of a hearer, and think how he would be affected by those reasons, which he purposes to employ for persuading others. For he must not expect to impose on mankind by mere arts of speech. They are not so easily imposed on, as public speakers are sometimes apt to think. Shrewdness and sagacity are found among all ranks; and the speaker may be praised for his fine discourse, while the hearers are not yet persuaded of the truth of any one thing he has uttered.

504. Supposing the arguments properly chosen, it is evident that their *effect* will, in some measure, depend on the right *arrangement* of them; so as they shall not justle and embarrass one another, but give mutual aid; and bear with the fairest and fullest direction on the point in view. Concerning this, the following rules may be taken:

505. In the first place, *avoid blending arguments* confusedly together, that are of a separate nature. All arguments whatever are directed to prove one or other of these three things: *first*, that something is true; *secondly*, that it is morally right or fit; or *thirdly*, that it is profitable and good.

506. These make the three great subjects of discussion among mankind; *truth*, *duty*, and *interest*. But the arguments directed towards any one of them are generically distinct; and he who blends them all under one topic, which he calls his argument, as, in sermons especially, is too often done, will render his reasoning indistinct and inelegant.

Illus. Suppose, for instance, that you are recommending to an audience benevolence, or the love of our neighbour; and that you take your first argument from the inward satisfaction which a benevolent temper affords; your second, from the obligation which the example of Christ lays upon you to this duty; and your third, from its tendency to procure us the good-will of all around us; your arguments are good, but you have arranged them wrong: for your first and third arguments are taken from considerations of interest, internal peace, and external advantages; and between these, you have introduced one, which rests wholly upon duty. You should have kept those classes of arguments, which are addressed to different principles in human nature, separate and distinct.

507. In the second place, with regard to the different *degrees of strength in arguments*, the general rule is, to advance in the way of climax, "ut augeatur semper, et increscat oratio."

Obs. 1. This especially is to be the course, when the speaker has a clear cause, and is confident that he can prove it fully. He may then adventure to begin with feebler arguments; rising gradually, and not putting forth his whole strength till the last, when he can trust to his making a successful impression on the minds of his hearers, prepared by what has gone before.

2. But this rule is not to be always followed. For, if he distrusts his cause, and has but one material argument on which to lay the stress, putting less confidence in the rest, in this case, it is often proper for him to place this material argument in the front; to pre-occupy the hearers early, and make the strongest effort at first: that, having removed prejudices, and disposed his hearers to be favourable, the rest of his reasoning may be listened to with more candour. When it happens, that amidst a variety of arguments, there are some which we are sensible are more inconclusive than the rest, and yet proper to be used, Cicero advises to place these in the middle, as a station less conspicuous than either the beginning, or the end, of the train of reasoning.

508. In the third place, when our *arguments* are *strong* and *satisfactory*, the more they are distinguished and treated apart from each other, the better. Each can then bear to be brought out by itself, placed in its full light, amplified and rested upon. But when our arguments are doubtful, and only of the presumptive kind, it is safer to throw them together in a crowd, and to run them into one another; that though infirm of themselves, they may serve mutually to prop each other.

509. In the fourth place, we must observe not to extend arguments too far, and multiply them too much. If we do, we rather render our cause suspected, than give it weight. An unnecessary multiplicity of arguments both burdens the memory, and detracts from the weight of that conviction which a few well-chosen arguments carry.

Obs. It is to be observed too, that in the *amplification* of arguments,

a diffuse and spreading method, beyond the bounds of reasonable illustration, is always enfeebling. It takes off greatly from that strength and sharpness which should be the distinguishing character of the argumentative part of a discourse. When a speaker dwells long on a favourite argument, and seeks to turn it into every possible light, it almost always happens, that, fatigued with the effort, he loses the spirit with which he set out, and concludes with feebleness what he began with force. There is a proper temperance in reasoning, as there is in other parts of a discourse.

510. After due attention given to the proper arrangement of arguments, what is next requisite for their success, is, to express them in such a style, and to deliver them in such a manner, as shall give them full force.

511. We now proceed to another essential part of discourse, which was mentioned as the fifth in order, that is, the PATHETIC; in which, if any where, eloquence reigns, and exerts its power.

512. On the head of the pathetic, the following directions may be found useful.

513. The first is to consider carefully, whether the subject admit the pathetic, and render it proper; and if it does, what part of the discourse is the most proper for attempting it.

Obs. 1. To determine these points belongs to good sense; for it is evident, that there are many subjects which admit not the pathetic at all, and that even in those that are susceptible of it, an attempt to excite the passions in the wrong place, may expose an orator to ridicule. All that can be said in general is, that if we expect any emotion which we raise to have a lasting effect, we must be careful to bring over to our side, in the first place, the understanding and judgment.

2. The hearers must be convinced that there are good and sufficient grounds for their entering with warmth into the cause. They must be able to justify to themselves the passion which they feel; and remain satisfied that they are not carried away by mere delusion.

3. Unless their minds be brought into this state, although they may have been heated by the orator's discourse, yet, as soon as he ceases to speak, they will resume their ordinary tone of thought; and the emotion which he has raised will produce no effect.

4. Hence most writers assign the pathetic to the peroration or conclusion, as its natural place; and, no doubt, all other things being equal, this is the impression that one would chuse to make last, leaving the minds of the hearers warmed with the subject, after argument and reasoning had produced their full effect: but wherever it is introduced, observe,

514. In the second place, never to set apart a head of a discourse in form, for raising any passion; never give warning that you are about to be pathetic; and call upon your hearers, as is sometimes done, to follow you in the attempt. This almost never fails to prove a refrigerant to passion. It

puts the hearers immdiately on their guard, and disposes them for criticising, much more than for being moved.

Obs. The indirect method of making an impression is likely to be more successful, when you seize the critical moment that is favourable to emotion, in whatever part of the discourse it occurs, and then, after due preparation, throw in such circumstances, and present such glowing images, as may kindle their passions before they are aware. This can often be done more happily, in a few sentences inspired by natural warmth, than in a long and studied address.

515. In the third place, it is necessary to observe, that there is a great difference between showing the hearers that they ought to be moved, and actually *moving* them.

Illus. To every emotion or passion, nature has adapted a set of corresponding objects; and, without setting these before the mind, it is not in the power of any orator to raise that emotion. I am warmed with gratitude, I am touched with compassion, not when a speaker shows me that these are noble dispositions, and that it is my duty to feel them; or when he exclaims against me for my indifference and coldness. All this time, he is speaking only to my reason or conscience. He must describe the kindness and tenderness of my friend; he must set before me the distress suffered by the person for whom he would interest me; then, and not till then, my heart begins to be touched, my gratitude or my compassion begins to flow.

Scholium. The foundation, therefore, of all successive execution in the way of pathetic oratory is, to paint the object of that passion which we wish to raise, in the most natural and striking manner; to describe this object with such circumstances as are likely to awaken in the minds of others the passion which we wish to raise. Every passion is most strongly excited by sensation; as anger by the feeling of an injury, or the presence of the injurer. Next to the influence of sense, is that of memory; and next to memory, is the influence of the imagination. Of this power, therefore, the orator must avail himself, so as to strike the imagination of the hearers with circumstances which, in lustre and steadiness, resemble those of sensation and remembrance. In order to accomplish this,

516. In the fourth place, the only effectual method is, to be moved yourselves. There are a thousand interesting circumstances suggested by real passion, which no art can imitate, and no refinement can supply. There is obviously a contagion among the passions.

Obs. The internal emotion of the speaker adds a pathos to his words, his looks, his gestures, and his whole manner, which exerts a power almost irresistible over those who hear him. But on this point, though the most material of all, we shall not insist, as all attempts towards becoming pathetic, when we are not moved ourselves, expose us to certain ridicule.

517. In the fifth place, it is necessary to attend to the *proper language of the passions.* We should observe in what manner any one expresses himself who is under the

power of a real and a strong passion; and we shall always find his language unaffected and simple.

Illus. 1. It may be animated, indeed, with bold and strong figures, but it will have no ornament or finery. He is not at leisure to follow out the play of imagination. His mind being wholly seized by one object, which has heated it, he has no other aim, but to represent that in all its circumstances, as strongly as he feels it.

2. This must be the style of the orator when he would be pathetic; and this will be his style, if he speaks from real feeling; bold, ardent, simple. No sort of description will then succeed, but what is written "fervente calamo." If he stay till he can work up his style, and polish and adorn it, he will infallibly cool his own ardour; and then he will touch the heart no more. His composition will become frigid; it will be the language of one who describes, but who does not feel.

3. We must take notice, that there is a great difference between painting to the imagination, and painting to the heart. The one may be done coolly and at leisure: the other must always be rapid and ardent. In the former, art and labour may be suffered to appear; in the latter, no effect can follow, unless it seem to be the work of nature only.

518. In the sixth place, avoid interweaving any thing of a *foreign nature* with the pathetic part of a discourse.

Obs. 1. Beware of all *digressions*, which may interrupt or turn aside the natural course of the passion, when once it begins to rise and swell.

2. Sacrifice all beauties, however bright and showy, which would divert the mind from the principal object, and which would amuse the imagination, rather than touch the heart.

3. Hence comparisons are always dangerous, and generally quite improper, in the midst of passion.

4. Beware even of reasoning unseasonably; or at least, of carrying on a long and subtile train of reasoning, on occasions when the principal aim is to excite warm emotions.

519. In the last place, never attempt prolonging the pathetic too much. Warm emotions are too violent to be lasting. Study the proper time of making a retreat; of making a transition from the passionate to the calm tone; in such a manner, however, as to descend without falling, by keeping up the same strain of sentiment that was carried on before, though now expressing it with more moderation.

Obs. Above all things, beware of straining passion too far; of attempting to raise it to unnatural heights. Preserve always a due regard to what the hearers will bear; and remember, that he who stops not at the proper point; who attempts to carry them farther, in passion, than they will follow him, destroys his whole design. By endeavouring to warm them too much, he takes the most effectual method of freezing them completely.

520. Concerning the PERORATION OR CONCLUSION, it is needless to say much, because it must vary so considerably, according to the strain of the preceding discourse.

Obs. 1. Sometimes the whole pathetic part comes in most properly

at the peroration. Sometimes, when the discourse has been entirely argumentative, it is fit to conclude with summing up the arguments, placing them in one view, and leaving the impression of them full and strong on the mind of the audience. For the great rule of a conclusion, and what nature obviously suggests, is to place that last on which we choose that the strength of our cause should rest.

2. In sermons, inferences from what has been said, make a common conclusion. But inferences to rise naturally should so much agree with the strain of sentiment throughout the discourse, as not to break the unity of the sermon. For inferences, how justly soever they may be, deduced from the doctrine of the text, yet have a bad effect, if, at the conclusion of a discourse, they introduce some subject altogether new, and turn off our attention from the main object to which the preacher had directed our thoughts. They appear, in this case, like excrescences jutting out from the body, and forming an unnatural addition to it; they tend to enfeeble the impression which the composition, as a whole, is calculated to make.

Scholium. In every discourse, it is a matter of importance to hit the precise time of concluding, so as to bring our subject just to a point; neither ending abruptly and unexpectedly; nor disappointing the expectation of the hearers, when they look for the close; and continuing to hover round and round the conclusion, till they become heartily tired of us. We should endeavour to go off with a good grace; not to end with a languishing and drawling sentence; but to close with dignity and spirit, that we may leave the minds of the hearers warm; and dismiss them with a favourable impression of the subject and of the speaker.

CHAPTER VI.

HISTORICAL WRITING.

521. AS it is the office of an *orator* to persuade, it is that of an HISTORIAN to record truth for the instruction of mankind. This is the proper object and end of history, from which may be deduced many of the laws relating to its composition; and if this object were always kept in view, it would prevent many of the errors into which persons are apt to fall concerning this species of composition.

Obs. As the primary end of history is to record truth, *impartiality*, *fidelity*, and *accuracy* are the fundamental qualities of an historian. He must neither be a panegyrist nor a satirist. He must not enter into faction, nor give scope to affection; but, contemplating past events and characters with a cool and dispassionate eye, must present to his readers a faithful copy of human nature.

522. Historical composition is understood to comprehend under it, annals, memoirs, lives. But these are its inferior subordinate species, on which we shall hereafter make some

reflections, when we shall have first considered what belongs to a regular work of history. Such a work is chiefly of two kinds. Either the entire history of some state or kingdom through its different revolutions, such as Livy's Roman History; Hume's History of England; or the history of some one great event, or some portion or period of time which may be considered as making a whole by itself; such as Thucydides's History of the Peloponnesian War, Davila's History of the Civil Wars of France, or Clarendon's of those of England; Robertson's History of Charles V.

Obs. 1. In the conduct and management of his subject, the first attention requisite in an historian, is to give it as much unity as possible; that is, his history should not consist of separate unconnected parts merely, but should be bound together by some connecting principle, which shall make on the mind the impression of something that is one, whole and entire.

2. In general histories, which record the affairs of a whole nation or empire throughout several ages, this unity will be more imperfect. Yet even there, some degree of it can be preserved by a skilful writer. For though the whole, taken together, be very complex, yet the great constituent parts of it form so many subordinate wholes, when taken by themselves; each of which can be treated both as complete within itself, and as connected with what goes before and follows.

Illus. 1. In the history of a monarch, for instance, every reign should have its own unity; a beginning, a middle, and an end, to the system of affairs; while, at the same time, we are taught to discern how that system of affairs rose from the preceding, and how it is inserted into what follows. We should be able to trace all the secret links of the chain, which binds together remote and seemingly unconnected events.

2. In some kingdoms of Europe, it was the plan of many successive princes to reduce the power of their nobles; and during several reigns, most of the leading actions had a reference to this end. In other states, the rising power of the Commons influenced, for a tract of time, the course and connection of public affairs.

3. Among the Romans, the leading principle was a gradual extension of conquest, and the attainment of universal empire. The continual increase of their power, advancing towards this end from small beginnings, and by a sort of regular progressive plan, furnished to Livy a happy subject for historical unity, in the midst of a great variety of transactions.

523. In order to fulfil the end of history, the author must study to trace to their springs the actions and events which he records. Two things are especially necessary for his doing this successfully; a thorough acquaintance with human nature, and political knowledge, or acquaintance with government. The former is necessary to account for the conduct of individuals, and to give just views of their character; the latter to account for the revolutions of government, and the operation of political causes on public affairs. Both

must concur, in order to form a completely instructive historian.

524. The first requisites of historical narration, are *clearness, order,* and *due connection.* To attain these, the historian must be completely master of his subject; he must see the whole as at one view; and comprehend the chain and dependence of all its parts, that he may introduce every thing in its proper place; that he may lead us smoothly along the tract of affairs which are recorded, and may always give us the satisfaction of seeing how one event arises out of another. Without this, there can be neither pleasure nor instruction, in reading history.

Obs. Much for this end will depend on the observance of that unity in the general plan and conduct, which has already been recommended. Much too will depend on the proper management of transitions. This forms one of the chief ornaments of this kind of writing, and is one of the most difficult in execution. Nothing tries an historian's abilities more, than so to lay his train beforehand, as to make us pass naturally and agreeably from one part of his subject to another; to employ no clumsy and awkward junctures; and to contrive ways and means of forming some union among transactions, which seem to be most widely separated from one another.

525. In the next place, as history is a very dignified species of composition, *gravity* must always be maintained in the narration. There must be no meanness nor vulgarity in the style: no quaint, nor colloquial phrases; no affectation of pertness, or of wit. The smart, or the sneering manner of telling a story, is inconsistent with the historical character.

Obs. On occasions where a light and ludicrous anecdote is proper to be recorded, it is generally better to throw it into a note, than to hazard becoming too familiar by introducing it into the body of the work.

526. But an historian may possess these qualities of being perspicuous, distinct, and grave, and may notwithstanding be a dull writer; in which case we shall reap little benefit from his labours.

Obs. We shall read him without pleasure; or, most probably, we shall soon give over reading him at all. He must therefore study to render his narration interesting; which is the quality that chiefly distinguishes a writer of genius and eloquence.

527. Two things are especially conducive to this; the first is, a just medium in the conduct of narration, between a rapid or crowded recital of facts, and a prolix detail. The former embarrasses and the latter tires us.

Obs. 1. An historian that would interest us, must know when to be

concise, and where he ought to enlarge; passing concisely over slight and unimportant events, but dwelling on such as are striking and considerable in their nature, or pregnant with consequences; preparing before hand our attention to them, and bringing them forth into the most full and conspicuous light.

2. The next thing he must attend to, is a proper selection of the circumstances belonging to those events which he chooses to relate fully. General facts make a slight impression on the mind. It is by means of circumstances and particulars properly chosen, that a narration becomes interesting and affecting to the reader. These give life, body, and colouring to the recital of facts, and enable us to behold them as present, and passing before our eyes. It is this employment of circumstances, in narration, that is properly termed historical painting.

528. The ancients employed one embellishment of history which the moderns have laid aside, namely, *orations*, which, on weighty occasions, they put into the mouths of some of their chief personages.

Obs. 1. By means of these, they diversified their history; they conveyed both moral and political instruction; and, by the opposite arguments which were employed, they gave us a view of the sentiments of different parties.

2. Orations may be an embellishment to history; such might also poetical compositions be, when introduced under the name of some of the personages mentioned in the narration, who were known to have possessed poetical talents. But neither can the one nor the other find a proper place in history.

3. Instead of inserting formal orations, the method adopted by later writers seems better and more natural; that of the historian, on some great occasion, delivering, in his own person, the sentiments and reasonings of the opposite parties, or the substance of what was understood to be spoken in some public assembly; which he may do without the liberty of fiction.

529. The drawing of characters is one of the most splendid, and, at the same time, one of the most difficult ornaments of historical composition. For characters are generally considered as professed exhibitions of fine writing; and an historian who seeks to shine in them, is frequently in danger of carrying refinement to excess, from a desire of appearing very profound and penetrating. He brings together so many contrasts, and subtile oppositions of qualities, that we are rather dazzled with sparkling expressions, than entertained with any clear conception of a human character.

Obs. A writer who would characterise in an instructive and masterly manner, should be simple in his style, and should avoid all quaintness and affectation; at the same time, not contenting himself with giving us general outlines only, but descending into those peculiarities which mark a character in its most strong and distinctive features. The Greek historians sometimes give eulogiums, but rarely draw full and professed characters. The two ancient authors who have laboured this part of historical composition most, are Sallust and Tacitus.

530. As history is a species of writing designed for the instruction of mankind, *sound morality* should always reign in it. Both in describing characters, and in relating transactions, the author should always show himself to be on the side of virtue.

Obs. 1. To deliver moral instruction in a formal manner, falls not within his province; but both as a good man, and as a good writer, we expect that he should evince sentiments of respect for virtue, and an indignation at flagrant vice.

2. To appear neutral and indifferent with respect to good and bad characters, and to affect a crafty and political, rather than a moral turn of thought, will, besides other bad effects, derogate greatly from the weight of historical composition, and will render the strain of it much more cold and uninteresting. We are always most interested in the transactions which are relating, when our sympathy is awakened by the story, when we become engaged in the fate of the actors. But this effect can never be produced by a writer who is deficient in sensibility and moral feeling.

531. MEMOIRS denote a sort of composition, in which an author does not pretend to give full information of all the facts respecting the period of which he writes, but only to relate what he himself had access to know, or what he was concerned in, or what illustrates the conduct of some person, or the circumstances of some transaction, which he chooses for his subject.

Obs. 1. From a writer of memoirs, therefore, is not expected the same profound research, or enlarged information, as from a writer of history. He is not subject to the same laws of unvarying dignity and gravity. He may talk freely of himself; he may descend into the most familiar anecdotes. What is chiefly required of him is, that he be sprightly and interesting; and, especially, that he inform us of things that are useful and curious; by conveying to us some sort of knowledge worth the acquiring.

2. This is a species of writing very enticing to such as love to write concerning themselves, and conceive every transaction in which they had a share, to be of singular importance. There is no wonder, therefore, that a nation so sprightly as the French should, for more than two centuries past, have been pouring forth a whole flood of memoirs; the greatest part of which are little better than agreeable trifles.

3. The memoirs of the Duke of Sully, in the state in which they are now given to the public, have great merit, and deserve to be mentioned with particular praise. No memoirs approach more nearly to the usefulness, and the dignity of a full authentic history. They have the peculiar advantage, of giving us a beautiful display of two of the most illustrious characters which history presents; Sully himself, one of the ablest and most incorrupt ministers, and Henry IV. one of the greatest and most amiable princes of modern times. Dr Blair says, that he knows few books more full of virtue and of good sense, than Sully's Memoirs; few, therefore, more proper to form both the heads and the hearts of such as are designed for public business, and action, in the world.

532. BIOGRAPHY, or the writing of lives, is a very useful kind of composition; less formal and stately than history; but to the bulk of readers, perhaps, no less instructive; as it affords them the opportunity of seeing the characters and tempers, the virtues and failings of eminent men fully displayed; and admits them into a more thorough and intimate acquaintance with such persons, than history generally allows.

Obs. 1. For a writer of lives may descend, with propriety, into minute circumstances, and familiar incidents. It is expected that he should give the private, as well as the public life, of the person whose actions he records; nay, it is from private life, from familiar, domestic, and seemingly trivial occurrences, that we often receive most light into the real character.

2. In this species of writing, Plutarch has no small merit; and to him we stand indebted for much of the knowledge that we possess, concerning several of the most eminent personages of antiquity. His matter is, indeed, better than his manner; as he cannot lay claim to any peculiar beauty or elegance. His judgment too, and his accuracy, have sometimes been taxed; but whatever defects of this kind he may be liable to, his Lives of Eminent Men will always be considered as a valuable treasure of instruction.

3. He is remarkable for being one of the most humane of all the writers of antiquity; less dazzled than many of them are, with the exploits of valour and ambition; and fond of displaying his great men to us, in the more gentle lights of retirement and private life.

533. A very great improvement has, of late years, been introduced into historical composition; namely, a more particular attention than was formerly given to *laws, customs, commerce, religion, literature,* and every other subject that tends to show the spirit and genius of nations.

Obs. 1. It is now understood to be the business of an able historian, to exhibit manners, as well as facts and events; and, assuredly, whatever displays the state and life of mankind, in different periods, and illustrates the progress of the human mind, is more useful and interesting than the detail of sieges and battles.

2. The person, to whom we are most indebted for the introduction of this improvement into history, is the celebrated M. Voltaire, whose genius has shone with surprising lustre, in many different parts of literature.

CHAPTER VII.

OF PHILOSOPHICAL WRITING, DIALOGUE, AND EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

534. PHILOSOPHICAL *writing.* As the professed object of *philosophy* is to convey *instruction*, it is manifest that every philosophical writer ought to study the utmost perspicuity with respect both to single words, and the construction of sentences. Beyond mere perspicuity, strict accuracy and precision are required in a philosophical writer. He should employ no words of uncertain meaning, no loose nor indeterminate expressions; and should avoid using words which are seemingly synonymous, without carefully attending to the variation which they make upon the idea.

Illus. 1. To be clear and precise then, are requisites which we have a title to demand from every philosophical writer. He may possess these qualities, and be at the same time a very dry writer. He should, therefore, study some degree of embellishment, in order to render his composition pleasing and graceful.

2. One of the most agreeable, and one of the most useful embellishments which a philosopher can employ, consists in illustrations taken from historical facts, and the characters of men. All moral and political subjects naturally afford scope for these; and wherever there is room for employing them, they seldom fail of producing a happy effect. They diversify the composition; they relieve the mind from the fatigue of mere reasoning, and at the same time raise more full conviction than any reasonings produce: for they take philosophy out of the abstract, and give weight to speculation, by shewing its connection with real life, and the actions of mankind.

535. Philosophical writing admits, besides, of a polished, a neat, and an elegant style. It admits of metaphors, comparisons, and all the calm figures of speech, by which an author may convey his sense to the understanding with clearness and force, at the same time that he entertains the imagination.

Obs. He must take great care, however, that all his ornaments be of the chastest kind, never partaking of the florid or the tumid; which is so unpardonable in a professed philosopher, that it is much better for him to err on the side of naked simplicity, than on that of too much ornament.

Illus. In English, Locke's celebrated Treatise on Human Understanding, may be pointed out as a model, on the one hand, of the greatest clearness and distinctness of philosophical style, with very little approach to ornament; Lord Shaftsbury's writings, on the other hand, exhibit philosophy dressed up with all the ornament which it can ad-

mit ; perhaps with more than is perfectly suited to it : Stuart's philosophical writings are composed with elegance and beauty.

536. DIALOGUE WRITING. Philosophical composition, when carried on in the way of *dialogue* and *conversation*, sometimes assumes a form, under which it mingles more with works of taste.

Obs. Under this form the ancients have given us some of their chief philosophical works ; and several of the moderns have endeavoured to imitate them.

Illus. Dialogue writing may be executed in two ways, either as direct conversation, where none but the speakers appear, which is the method that Plato uses ; or as the recital of a conversation, where the author himself appears, and gives an account of what passed in discourse ; which is the method that Cicero generally follows. But though those different methods make some variation in the form, yet the nature of the composition is, in its elements, the same in both, and is therefore subject to the same laws.

537. A dialogue in one or other of these forms, on some philosophical, moral, or critical subject, when it is well conducted, stands in a high rank among the works of taste ; but is much more difficult in the execution than is commonly imagined. For it requires more than merely the introduction of different persons speaking in succession.

Illus. 1. It ought to be a natural and spirited representation of real conversation ; exhibiting the character and manners of the several speakers, and suiting to the character of each that peculiarity of thought and expression, which distinguishes him from another.

2. A dialogue, thus conducted, gives the reader a very agreeable entertainment ; as by means of the debate going on among the personages, he receives a fair and full view of both sides of the argument ; and is, at the same time, amused with polite conversation, and with a display of consistent and well-supported characters.

Corol. An author, therefore, who has genius for executing such a composition after this manner, has it in his power both to instruct and to please.

538. EPISTOLARY WRITING possesses a kind of middle place between the serious and amusing species of composition. Epistolary writing appears, at first view, to stretch into a very wide field. For there is no subject whatever, on which one may not convey his thoughts to the public, in the form of a letter.

Illus. For instance : Lord Shaftsbury, Mr. Harris, and several other writers, have chosen to give this form to philosophical treatises. But this is not sufficient to class such treatises under the head of epistolary composition. Though they bear, in the title-page, "a letter to a friend," after the first address, the friend disappears, and we see that it is, in truth, the public with whom the author corresponds. Seneca's Epistles are of this sort. There is no probability that they ever passed in correspondence as real letters. They are no other than miscellane-

ous dissertations on moral subjects ; which the author, for his convenience, chose to put into the epistolary form. Even where one writes a real letter on some formal topic, as of moral or religious consolation to a person under distress, such as Sir William Temple has written to the Countess of Essex on the death of her daughter, he is at liberty, on such an occasion, to write wholly as a divine or as a philosopher, and to assume the style and manner of either without reprehension. We consider the author not as writing a letter, but as composing a discourse, suited particularly to the circumstances of some one person. Russel's histories are in the form of letters.

539. Epistolary writing becomes a distinct species of composition, subject to the cognizance of criticism, only, or chiefly, when it is of the easy and familiar kind ; when it is conversation carried on upon paper, between two friends at a distance.

Illus. 1. Such an intercourse, when well conducted, may be rendered very agreeable to readers of taste. If the subject of the letters be important, they will be the more valuable. Even though there should be nothing very considerable in the subject, yet if the spirit and turn of the correspondence be agreeable ; if they be written in a sprightly manner, and with native grace and ease, they may still be entertaining ; more especially if there be any thing to interest us, in the characters of those who write them.

2. Hence the curiosity which the public have always evinced, concerning the letters of eminent persons. We expect in them to discover something of their real character. It is childish indeed to expect, that in letters we are to find the whole heart of the author unveiled. Concealment and disguise take place, more or less, in all human intercourse.

3. But still, as letters from one friend to another make the nearest approach to conversation, we may expect to see more of a character displayed in these than in other productions, which are designed for public view. We are pleased with beholding the writer in a situation which allows him to be at his ease, and to give vent occasionally to the overflowings of his heart.

540. Much, therefore, of the merit, and the agreeableness of epistolary writing, will depend on its introducing us into some acquaintance with the writer. There, if any where, we look for the man, not for the author.

Illus. 1. Its first and fundamental requisite is, to be *natural* and *simple ;* for a stiff and laboured manner is as bad in a letter, as it is in conversation. This does not banish sprightliness and wit. These are graceful in letters, just as they are in conversation ; when they flow easily, and without being studied ; when employed so as to season, not to cloy. One who, either in conversation or in letters, affects to shine and to sparkle always, will not please long.

2. The style of letters should not be too highly polished. It ought to be neat and correct, but no more. All nicety about words, betrays study; and hence musical periods, and appearances of number and harmony in arrangement, should be carefully avoided in letters.

3. The best letters are commonly such as the authors have written

with most facility. What the heart or the imagination dictates, always flows readily; but where there is no subject to warm or interest these, constraint appears; and hence, those letters of mere compliment, congratulation, or affected condolence, which have cost the authors most labour in composing, and which, for that reason, they perhaps consider as their master-pieces, never fail of being the most disagreeable and insipid to the readers.

4. It ought, at the same time, to be remembered, that the ease and simplicity which we have recommended in epistolary correspondence, are not to be understood as importing entire carelessness. In writing to the most intimate friend, a certain degree of attention, both to the subject and the style, is requisite and becoming. It is no more than what we owe both to ourselves, and to the friend with whom we correspond. A slovenly and negligent manner of writing, is a disobliging mark of want of respect. The liberty, besides, of writing letters with too careless a hand, is apt to betray us into imprudence in what we write.

5. The first requisite, both in conversation and correspondence, is to attend to all the proper decorums which our own character, and that of others, demand. An imprudent expression in conversation may be forgotten and pass away; but when we take the pen into our hand, we must remember, that, "the word which hath been written remains.*"

Example 1. In our own times, several collections of letters have issued from the press. Among these, Franklin's correspondence holds a most distinguished place.

2. But of all the letters which this or any country hath produced, the most finished, perhaps, are those of Lord Chesterfield. Lady Montagu's Letters entitle her to rank among authors of a superior class.

3. The most distinguished collection of letters, however, in the English Language, is that of Pope, Dean Swift, and their friends; partly published in Pope's works, and partly in those of Dean Swift.

* "Litera scripta manet."

BOOK VII.

POETRY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF POETRY.

541. POETRY is the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed, most commonly, into regular numbers.

542. The historian, the orator, and the philosopher, address themselves, for the most part, primarily to the understanding: their direct aim is to inform, to persuade, or to instruct. But the primary aim of a poet is to please, and to move; and, therefore, it is to the imagination, and the passions, that he speaks.

Illus. 1. He may, and he ought to have it in his view, to instruct and to reform; but it is indirectly, and by pleasing and moving, that he accomplishes this end. His mind is supposed to be animated by some interesting object, which fires his imagination, or engages his passions; and which, of course, communicates to his style a peculiar elevation suited to his ideas; very different from that mode of expression, which is natural to the mind in its calm and ordinary state.

2. Yet, though versification be, in general, the exterior distinction of poetry, there are some forms of verse so loose and familiar, as to be hardly distinguishable from prose; such as the verse of Terence's comedies; and there is also a species of prose, so measured in its cadence, and so much raised in its tone, as to approach very near to poetical numbers; such as the Telemachus of Fenelon, and the English translation of Ossian. Dr. Johnson's Rasselas is perhaps of this class too.

3. The truth is, verse and prose, on some occasions, run into one another, like light and shade. It is hardly possible to determine the exact limit where prose ends, and poetry begins; nor is there any occasion for being very precise about the boundaries, as long as the nature of each is understood.

543. The Greeks, ever fond of attributing to their own nation the invention of all sciences and arts, have ascribed the origin of poetry to Orpheus, Linus, and Musæus.

Obs. There were, perhaps, such persons as these, who were the first distinguished bards in the Grecian countries. But long before such names were heard of, and among nations where they were never known, poetry existed.

544. It has been often said, and the concurring voice of all antiquity affirms, that poetry is older than prose. But in what sense this seemingly strange paradox holds true, has not always been well understood. *(See Art. 30. and Illus.)*

Illus. 1. There never, certainly, was any period of society in which men conversed in poetical numbers. It was in very humble and scanty prose, as we may easily believe, that the first tribes carried on intercourse among themselves, relating to the necessities of life. But from the very beginning of society, there were occasions on which they met together for feasts, sacrifices, and public assemblies; and on all such occasions, it is well known, that music, song, and dance, their principal entertainment.

2. It is chiefly in America, that we have had the opportunity of being made acquainted with men in their savage state. We learn from the particular and concurring accounts of travellers, that, among all the nations of that vast continent, especially among the northern tribes, with whom we have had most intercourse, music and song are, at all their meetings, carried on with an incredible degree of enthusiasm; that the chiefs of the tribe are those who signalize themselves most on such occasions; that it is in songs they celebrate their religious rites; that, by these, they lament their public and private calamities, the death of friends, or the loss of warriors; express their joy on their victories; celebrate the great actions of their nation, and their heroes; excite each other to perform great exploits in war, or to suffer death, and torments with unshaken constancy. *(Art 19. Illus. 1.)*

Corol. Here then we see the first beginnings of poetic composition, in those rude effusions, which the enthusiasm of fancy or passion suggested to untaught men, when roused by interesting events, and by their meeting together in public assemblies.

545. Man, by nature, is both a poet, and a musician. The same impulse which prompted the enthusiastic poetic style, prompted a certain melody, or modulation of sound, suited to the emotions of joy or grief, of admiration, love, or anger. There is a power in sound, which, partly from nature, partly from habit and association, makes such pathetic impressions on the fancy, as delight even the most wild barbarians.

Corol. Music and poetry, therefore, had the same rise; they were prompted by the same occasions; they were united in song; and, as long as they continued united, they tended, without doubt, mutually to heighten and exalt each other's power.

546. The first poets sung their own verses: and hence the beginning of what we call *versification*, or words arranged in a more artful order than prose, so as to be suited to some tune or melody.

Illus. The liberty of transposition, or inversion, which the poetic

style would naturally assume, made it easier to form the words into some sort of numbers that fell in with the music of the song. Very harsh and uncouth, we may easily believe, these numbers would be at first. But the pleasure was felt; it was studied; and versification, by degrees, passed into an art. *(Art. 25. Illus.)*

Corol. 1. It appears from what has been said, that the first compositions which were either recorded by writing or transmitted by tradition, could be no other than poetical compositions. No other but these, could draw the attention of men in their rude uncivilized state. Indeed they knew no other.

2. Cool reasoning and plain discourse had no power to attract savage tribes, addicted only to hunting and war. There was nothing that could either rouse the speaker to pour himself forth, or draw the crowd to listen, but the high powers of passion, of music, and of song. This vehicle, poetry, therefore, and no other, could be employed by chiefs and legislators, when they meant to instruct or animate their tribes.

3. There is, likewise, a farther reason why such compositions only could be transmitted to posterity; because, before writing was invented, songs only could last, and be remembered. The ear gave assistance to the memory, by the help of numbers; fathers repeated and sung them to their children; and by this oral tradition of national ballads, were conveyed all the historical knowledge, and all the instruction, of the first ages.

547. The earliest accounts which history gives us concerning all nations, bear testimony to these facts. In the *first ages* of Greece, priests, philosophers, and statesmen, all delivered their instructions in poetry.

Illus. Apollo, Orpheus, and Amphion, their most ancient bards, are represented as the first tamers of mankind, the first founders of law and civilization. Minos and Thales sung to the lyre the laws which they composed*; and till the age immediately preceding that Herodotus, history had appeared in no other form than that of poetical tales.

548. In the same manner, among all other nations, poets are the first literary characters, and songs are the first compositions, that make their appearance. (*Illus. 2. Art. 544. and Art. 21.*)

Illus. Among the Scythian or Gothic nations, many of their kings and leaders were scalders, or poets; and it is from their *runic* songs, that the most early writers of their history, among whom we may reckon Saxo-Grammaticus, acknowledged, that they had derived their chief information. Among the Celtic tribes, in Gaul, Britain, and Ireland, we know, in what admiration their bards were held, and what great influence they possessed over the people. They were both poets and musicians, in each of these countries. They were always near the person of the chief or sovereign; they recorded all his great exploits; they were employed as the ambassadors between contending tribes, and their persons were held sacred.

549. Diversity of climate and of manner of living, hath occasioned some diversity in the strain of the first poetry

*Strabo, l. 10.

of nations; chiefly, according as those nations are of a more ferocious, or of a more gentle spirit; and according as they advance faster or slower in the arts of civilization. (*Art.* 31.)

Illus. 1. Thus we find all the remains of the ancient Gothic poetry remarkably fierce, and breathing nothing but slaughter and blood; while the Peruvian and the Chinese songs turned, from the earliest times, upon milder subjects. The Celtic poetry, in the days of Ossian, though chiefly of the martial kind, yet had attained a considerable mixture of tenderness and refinement; in consequence of the long cultivation of poetry among the Celtæ, by means of a series and succession of bards which had been established for ages. So Lucan informs us:

> Vos quoque qui fortes animos, belloque peremptos
> Laudibus in longum vates diffunditis ævum
> Plurima securi fudistis carmina bardi.* (L. 44.)

2. Among the Grecian states, the early poetry appears to have received a philosophical cast, from what we are informed concerning the subjects of Orpheus, Linus, and Musæus, who treated of creation and of chaos, of the generation of the world, and of the rise of things; and we know that the Greeks advanced sooner to philosophy, and proceeded with a quicker pace in all the arts of refinement, than most other nations.

3. The Arabians and the Persians have always been the greatest poets of the East; and among them, as among other people, poetry was the earliest vehicle of all their learning and instruction.†

550. During the infancy of poetry, all the different kinds of it lay confused, and were mingled in the same composition, according as inclination, enthusiasm, or casual incidents, directed the poet's strain.

Illus. 1. Odes and hymns of every sort, would naturally be among the first compositions; according as the bards were moved by religious feelings, by exultation, resentment, love, or any other warm sentiment, to pour themselves forth in song.

2. Plaintive or elegiac poetry, would as naturally arise from lamentations over their deceased friends.

3. The recital of the achievements of their heroes, and their ancestors, gave birth to what we now call epic poetry; and as, not content with symply reciting these, they would infallibly be led, at some of their public meetings, to represent them, by introducing different bards speaking in the character of their heroes, and anwering each other, we find in this the first outlines of tragedy, or dramatic writing.

551. None of these kinds of poetry, however, were in the first ages of society properly distinguished or separated, as they are now, from each other. Indeed, not only were the

* You too, ye bards, whom sacred raptures fire,
To chaunt your heroes to your country's lyre,
Who consecrate in your immortal strain
Brave patriot souls in righteous battle slain;
Securely now the useful task renew,
And noblest themes in deathless songs pursue. *Rowe.*

† Vid. Voyages de Chardin, chap. de la Poesie des Persans.

different kinds of poetry then mixed together, but all that we now call letters, or composition of any kind, was then blended in one mass.

Obs. 1. When the progress of society brought on a separation of the different arts and professions of civil life, it led also by degrees to a separation of the different literary provinces from each other.

2. The art of writing was in process of time invented; *(Chap V. Book I.)* records of past transactions began to be kept; men, occupied with the subjects of policy and useful arts, wished now to be instructed and informed, as well as moved. They reasoned and reflected upon the affairs of life; and were interested by what was real, not fabulous, in past transactions.

3. The historian, therefore, now laid aside the buskins of poetry; he wrote in prose, and attempted to give a faithful and judicious relation of former events. The philosopher addressed himself chiefly to the understanding. The orator studied to persuade by reasoning, and retained more or less of the ancient passionate and glowing style, according as it was conducive to his purpose. *(Art. 41. and 42.)*

Corol. Poetry hence became a separate art, calculated chiefly to please, and confined generally to such subjects as related to the imagination and passions. Even its earliest companion, music, was in a great measure divided from it.

CHAPTER II.

VERSIFICATION.

552. NATIONS, whose language and pronunciation were of a musical kind, rested their *versification* chiefly upon the *quantities*, that is, the *length* or *shortness* of their *syllables*. Others, who did not make the quantities of their syllables be so distinctly perceived in pronouncing them, rested the melody of their verse upon the number of syllables which it contained, upon the proper disposition of accents and pauses in reciting it, and frequently upon that return of corresponding sounds, which we call rhyme.

Illus. 1. The former was the case with the Greeks and Romans; the latter is the case with us, and with most modern nations.

2. Among the Greeks and Romans, every syllable, or at least by far the greatest number of syllables, was known to have a fixed and determined quantity; and their manner of pronouncing rendered this so sensible to the ear, that a long syllable was counted precisely equal in time to two short ones.

3. Upon this principle, the number of syllables contained in their hexameter verse, was allowed to vary. It may extend to 17; it can contain, when regular, no fewer than 13; but the musical time was,

notwithstanding, precisely the same in every hexameter verse, and was always equal to that of 12 long syllables.

4. In order to ascertain the regular time of every verse, and the proper mixture and succession of long and short syllables which ought to compose it, what the grammarians call *metrical feet*, *dactyles*, *spondees*, *iambuses*, &c. were invented. By these measures was tried the accuracy of composition in every line, and whether it was so constructed as to complete its proper melody.

5. It was requisite, for instance, that the hexameter verse should have the quantity of its syllables so disposed, that it could be scanned or measured by six metrical feet, which might be either dactyles or spondees (as the musical time of both of these is the same,) with this restriction only, that the fifth foot was regularly to be a dactyle, and the last a spondee.

Obs. The genius of our language corresponds not in this respect to the Greek or Latin; yet, in the sequel, it is shewn, that English poetry has its feet, though differently formed from the ancient. We rest the melody of our verse upon the number of syllables which it contains, &c. (*Art.* 552.)

Feet and Pauses are the constituent Parts of Verse.

We shall consider these separately.

OF POETICAL FEET.

553. A certain number of connected syllables forms a foot. These syllables, thus connected, are called *feet*, because it is by their aid that the voice, as it were, steps along through the verse, in a measured pace; and it is necessary that the syllables which mark this regular movement of the voice, should, in some manner, be distinguished from the others.

Illus. 1. This distinction, we have shewn, (*Illus.* 1. *Art.* 552.) was made among the ancient Romans, by dividing their syllables into long and short, and ascertaining their quantity, by an exact proportion of time in sounding them; the long being to the short, as two to one; and the long syllables, being thus the more important, marked the movement.

2. In English, syllables are divided into accented and unaccented; (*Illus.* 1. *Art.* 552.); and the accented syllables being as strongly distinguished from the unaccented, by the peculiar stress of the voice upon them, are equally capable of marking the movement, and pointing out the regular paces of the voice, as the long syllables were by their quantity, among the Romans.

554. English feet, formed by an accent on vowels, are exactly of the same nature as the ancient feet, and have the same just quantity in their syllables. So that, in this respect, we have all that the ancients had, and something which they had not. We have in fact duplicates of each

foot, yet with such a difference, as to fit them for different purposes, to be applied at our pleasure.

Obs. From its nature, every foot has powers peculiar to itself; and it is upon the knowledge and right application of these powers, that the pleasure and effect of numbers chiefly depend.

555. All the feet used in poetry consist either of two, or of three syllables; and are reducible to eight kinds; namely, four of two syllables, and four of three, as follows:

DISSYLLABLE.	TRISSYLLABLE.
A Trocheee – ⏑	A Dactyl – ⏑ ⏑
An Iambus ⏑ –	An Amphibrach ⏑ – ⏑
A Spondee – –	An Anapæst ⏑ ⏑ –
A Pyrrhic ⏑ ⏑	A Tribrach ⏑ ⏑ ⏑

556. A Trochee has the first syllable accented, and the last unaccented: as, "Hātefŭl, péttish."

557. An Iambus has the first syllable unaccented, and the last accented: as, "Bĕtrāy, consíst."

558. A Spondee has both the words or syllables accented: as, "The pāle mōōn."

559. A Pyrrhic has both the words or syllables unaccented: as, "On thĕ tall tree."

560. A Dactyl has the first syllable accented, and the two latter unaccented: as, "Lābŏurĕr, póssible."

561. An Amphibrach has the first and last syllables unaccented, and the middle one accented: as, "Dĕlīghtfŭl, doméstic."

562. An Anapæst has the two first syllables unaccented, and the last accented: as, "Cŏntrăvēne, acquiésce."

563. A Tribrach has all its syllables unaccented: as, "Nūmĕrăblĕ, cónquerable."

Scholium. Some of these feet may be denominated *principal* feet, as pieces of poetry may be wholly, or chiefly formed of any of them. Such are the Iambus, Trochee, Dactyl, and Anapæst. The others may be termed *secondary* feet; because their chief use is to diversify the numbers, and to improve the verse.

We shall first explain the Nature of the principal Feet.

564. Iambic verses may be divided into several species, according to the number of feet or syllables of which they are composed.

Example 1. The shortest form of the English Iambic consists of an Iambus, with an additional short syllable: as,

Dĭsdāinĭng,
Complaining,
Consenting,
Repenting.

Obs. We have no poem of this measure, but it may be met with in stanzas. The Iambus, with this addition, coincides with the Amphibrach. (*Art.* 561.)

Example 2. The second form of our Iambic, is also too short to be continued through any great number of lines. It consists of *two* Iambuses.

Whăt plāce ĭs hēre!
What scenes appear!
To me the rose
No longer glows.

It sometimes takes, or it may take, an additional short syllable: as,

Upon ă mōuntăin
Beside a fountain.

Example 3. The third form consists of *three* Iambuses.

In plācĕs fār ŏr nēar,
Or famous or obscure,
Where wholesome is the air,
Or where the most impure.

It sometimes admits of an additional short syllable: as,

Oŭr hēarts nŏ lōngĕr lāngŭish.

Example 4. The fourth form is made up of *four* Iambuses.

And māy ăt lāst mў wēarў āge,
Find out the peaceful hermitage.

Example 5. The fifth species of English Iambic, consists of *five* Iambuses.

Hŏw lōv'd, hŏw vāiŭ'd ōnce, ăvāils thĕe nōt,
To whom related, or by whom begot:
A heap of dust alone remains of thee;
'Fis all thou art and all the proud shall be.

Bĕ wīse tŏ-dāy, 'tĭs mādnĕss tō dĕfēr;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.

Obs. This is called the *heroic* measure. In its simplest form it consists of five Iambuses; but by the admission of other feet, as Trochees, Dactyls, Anapæsts, &c. it is capable of many varieties. Indeed, most of the English common measures may be varied in the same way, as well as by the different position of their pauses.

Example 6. The sixth form of our Iambic, is commonly called the *Alexandrine* measure. It consists of *six* Iambuses.

Fŏr thōu ărt būt ŏf dūst: bĕ hūmblĕ ānd bĕ wīse.

The Alexandrine is sometimes introduced into heroic rhyme; and when used sparingly, and with judgment, occasions an agreeable variety.

Thĕ sēas shăll wāste, thĕ skĭes ĭn smōke dĕcāy,
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But fix'd his word, his saving pow'r remains:
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns.

Example 7. The seventh and last form of our Iambic measure, is made up of *seven* Iambuses.

Thĕ Lōrd dĕscēndĕd frōm ăbōve, ănd bōw'd thĕ hēavĕns hīgh.

This was anciently written in one line; but it is now broken into two; the first containing four feet and the second three:

Whĕn āll thy mĕrciĕs, O my Gŏd!
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

Scholium. In all these measures, the accents are to be placed on even syllables; and every line considered by itself, is, in general, more melodious, as this rule is more strictly observed.

565. Trochaic verse is of several kinds.

Example 1. The shortest Trochaic verse in our language, consists of one Trochee and a long syllable.

Tūmŭlt cēase
Sink to peace.

Obs. This measure is defective in dignity, and can seldom be used on serious occasions.

Example 2. The second English form of the Trochaic consists of *two* feet; and is likewise so brief, that it is rarely used for any very serious purpose.

On thĕ mōuntăin
By a fountain.

It sometimes contains two feet or trochees, with an additional long syllable: as,

Īn thĕ dāys ŏf ōld
Fables plainly told.

Example 3. The third species consists of *three* trochees: as,

Whēn ŏur hĕarts ăre mōurnĭng:

or of three trochees, with an additional long syllable; as,

Rēstlĕss mōrtăls tōil fŏr nōught;
Bliss in vain from earth is sought;
Bliss, a native of the sky,
Never wanders. Mortals, try;
There you cannot seek in vain;
For to seek her is to gain.

Example 4. The fourth Trochaic species consists of *four* trochees: as,

Rōund ŭs rōars thĕ tēmpĕst lōudĕr.

This form may take an additional long syllable, as follows:

Īdlĕ āftĕr dīnnĕr īn hĭs chāir,
Sat a farmer, ruddy, fat, and fair.

But this measure is very uncommon.

Example 5. The fifth Trochaic species is likewise uncommon. It is composed of *five* trochees.

Āll thăt wālk ŏn fōot ŏr rīde ĭn chărĭōts,
All that dwell in palaces and garrets.

Example 6. The sixth form of the English Trochaic consists of *six* trochees: as,

Ōn ă mōuntăin, strētch'd bĕnēath ā hōary wīllŏw,
Lay a shepherd swain, and view'd the rolling billow.

This seems to be the longest Trochaic line that our language admits.

Obs. In all these Trochaic measures, the accent is to be placed on the odd syllables.

566. The Dactylic verse being very uncommon, we shall give only one example of one species of it:

Frŏm thĕ lŏw plĕasŭres ŏf thĭs fălĕn nātŭre,
Rise we to higher, &c.

567. Anapæstic verses are divided into several species.

Example 1. The shortest anapæstic verse must be a *single* anapæst: as,

Bŭt ĭn vāin,
They complain.

This measure is, however, ambiguous; for, by laying the stress of the voice on the first and third syllables, we might make it a trochaic. And therefore the first and simplest form of our genuine Anapæstic verse, is made up of *two* Anapæsts: as,

Bŭt hĭs cōurăge 'găn fāil,
For no arts could avail.

This form admits of an additional short syllable.

Thĕn hĭs cōurăge 'găn fāil hĭm,
For no arts could avail him.

Example 2. The second species consists of *three* Anapæsts.

Ŏ yĕ wōods, sprĕad yŏur brānchĕs ăpāce;
To your deepest recesses I fly;
I would hide with the beasts of the chase;
I would vanish from every eye.

This is a very pleasing measure, and much used, both in solemn and cheerful subjects.

Example 3. The third kind of the English Anapæstic, consists of *four* Anapæsts.

Măy ĭ gŏvĕrn my pāssĭons wĭth ābsŏlŭte swāy;
And grow wiser and better as life wears away.

This measure will admit of a short syllable at the end; as,

Ŏn thĕ wārm chĕek ŏf yōuth, smĭles ănd rōsĕs ăre blĕndĭng.

Obs. The preceding are the different kinds of the principal feet, in their more simple forms. They are capable of numerous variations, by the intermixture of those feet with each other; and by the admission of the secondary feet.

568. We have observed, that English verse is composed of feet formed by accent, (*Illus.* 2. *Art.* 553.); and that when the accent falls on vowels, the feet are equivalent to those formed by quantity. (*Art.* 554.)

Example 1. That the student may clearly perceive this difference, we shall produce a specimen of each kind.

O'ĕr hēaps ŏf rūĭns stālk'd thĕ stātely hĭnd.

Obs. Here we see the accent is upon the vowel in each second syllable. (*Art.* 552.) In the following line, we shall find the same Iambic movement, but formed by accent on coŭsonants, except the last syllable.

Then rŭstling, crăckling, crăshing, thŭnder dŏwn.

Example 2. Here the time of the short accented syllables, is compensated by a short pause, at the end of each word to which they belong.

569. We now proceed to show the manner in which poetry is varied and improved, by the admission of *secondary* feet into its composition.

Mŭrmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.

Obs. 1. The first foot here is a Dactyl; the rest are Iambics.

O'er mány ă frŏzen, mápy a flery Alp.

2. This line contains three Amphibrachs mixed with Iambics.

Innŭmĕrăblĕ before th' Almighty's throne.

3. Here, in the second foot, we find a Tribrach.

Sĕē thĕ bŏld yŏuth străin ŭp the thrĕat'ning stĕep.

4. In this line, the first foot is a Trochee; the second a genuine Spondee by quantity; the third a Spondee by accent.

5. In the following line, the first foot is a Pyrrhic, the second a Spondee.

Thăt ŏn wĕak wĭngs from far pursues your flight.

Scholium. From the preceding view of English versification, we may see what a copious stock of materials it possesses. For we are not only allowed the use of all the ancient poetic feet, in our heroic measure, but we have, as before observed, duplicates of each, agreeing in movement, though differing in measure,* and which make different impressions on the ear; an opulence peculiar to our language, and which may be the source of a boundless variety.

570. Another essential circumstance in the constitution of our verse, is the *cæsural pause*, which falls towards the middle of each line. Some pause of this kind, dictated by the melody, is found in the verse of most nations.

Obs. It is found, as might be shewn, in the Latin hexameter. In the French heroic verse, it is very sensible. That is a verse of twelve syllables, and in every line, just after the sixth syllable, there falls regularly and indispensably, a cæsural pause, dividing the line into two equal hemistichs.

Example. Jeune et vaillant heros ‖ dont la haute sagesse
N'est point le fruit tardif ‖ d'une lente vieillesse,
Qui seul sans ministre ‖ à l'example des Dieux
Soutiens tout par toi-meme ‖ et vois tous par ses veux.†

* Movement and measure are thus distinguished. *Movement* expresses the progressive order of sounds, whether from strong to weak, from long to short, or *vice versa*. *Measure* signifies the proportion of time, both in sounds and pauses. *Murray.*

† Boileau.

Analysis. In this train all the French verses proceed ; the one half of the line always answering to the other, and the same chime returning incessantly on the ear without intermission or change ; which is certainly a defect in the verse, and unfits it so very much for the freedom and dignity of heroic poetry. On the other hand, it is a distinguishing advantage of our English verse, that it allows the pause to be varied through four different syllables in the line.

Scholium. The pause may fall after the 4th, the 5th, the 6th, or the 7th syllable ; and according as the pause is placed after one or other of these syllables, the melody of the verse is much changed, its air and cadence are diversified. By this means, uncommon richness and variety are added to English versification.

571. When the pause falls earliest, that is, after the fourth syllable, the briskest melody is thereby formed, and the most spirited air given to the line.

Example. In the following lines of the Rape of the Lock, Mr. Pope has, with exquisite propriety, suited the construction of the verse to the subject:

On her white breast ‖ a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss ‖ and infidels adore ;
Her lively looks ‖ a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes ‖ and as unfixed as those,
Favours to none ‖ to all she smiles extends,
Oft she rejects ‖ but never once offends.

572. When the pause falls after the fifth syllable, dividing the line into two equal portions, the melody is sensibly altered. The verse loses that brisk and sprightly air, which it had with the former pause, and becomes more smooth, gentle, and flowing.

Example. Eternal sunshine ‖ of the spotless mind,
Each prayer accepted ‖ and each wish resigned.

573. When the pause proceeds to follow the sixth syllable, the tenor of the music becomes solemn and grave. The verse marches now with a more slow and measured pace, than in either of the two former cases.

Example. The wrath of Peleus's son ‖ the direful spring
Of all the Grecian woes ‖ O goddess sing !

574. But the grave solemn cadence becomes still more sensible, when the pause falls after the seventh syllable, which is the nearest place to the end of the line that it can occupy.

Obs. This kind of verse occurs the most seldom, but has a happy effect in diversifying the melody. It produces that slow Alexandrian air, which is finely suited to a close ; and for this reason, such lines almost never occur together, but are used in finishing the couplet.

Example. And in the smooth description ‖ murmur still.
Long loved adored ideas ! ‖ all adieu.

Obs. These examples have been taken from verses in rhyme ; because in these, our versification is subjected to the strictest law. As

blank verse is of a freer kind, and is naturally read with less cadence or tone, the pauses in it, and the effect of them, are not always so sensible to the ear. It is constructed, however, entirely upon the same principles, with respect to the place of the pause.

575. Our BLANK VERSE possesses great advantages, and is indeed a noble, bold, and disencumbered species of versification. The principal defect in rhyme, is the full close which it forces upon the ear, at the end of every couplet. Blank verse is freed from this, and allows the lines to run into each other with as great liberty as the Latin hexameter permits, perhaps with greater. Hence it is particularly suited to subjects of dignity and force, which demand more free and manly numbers than rhyme.

Illus. The constraint and strict regularity of rhyme, are unfavourable to the sublime, or to the highly pathetic strain. An epic poem, or a tragedy, would be fettered and degraded by it. It is best adapted to compositions of a temperate strain, where no particular vehemence is required in the sentiments, nor great sublimity in the style; such as pastorals, elegies, epistles, satires, &c. To these it communicates that degree of elevation which is proper for them; and without any other assistance, sufficiently distinguishes the style from prose. He who should write such poems in blank verse, would render his work harsh and unpleasing. In order to support a poetical style, he would be obliged to affect a pomp of language, unsuitable to the subject.

Scholia 1. The present form of our English heroic rhyme in couplets, is a modern species of versification. The measure generally used in the days of Queen Elizabeth, King James, and King Charles I. was the stanza of eight lines, such as Spenser employs, borrowed from the Italian; a measure very constrained and artificial.

2. Waller was the first who brought couplets into vogue; and Dryden afterwards established the usage. Waller first smoothed our verse; Dryden perfected it. Pope's versification has a peculiar character. It is flowing and smooth in the highest degree; far more laboured and correct than that of any who went before him. He introduced one considerable change into heroic verse, by totally throwing aside the triplets, or three lines rhyming together, in which Dryden abounded. Dryden's versification, however, has very great merit; and, like all his productions, has much spirit, mixed with carelessness. It is not so smooth and correct as Pope's, it is, however, more varied and easy. He subjects himself less to the rule of closing the sense with a couplet; and frequently takes the liberty of making his couplets run into one another, with somewhat of the freedom of blank verse. If any one, after reading Pope's Rape of the Lock, or Eloisa to Abelard, shall not admit our rhyme, with all its varieties of pauses, to carry both elegance and sweetness of sound, his ear must be pronounced to be of a very peculiar kind.

CHAPTER III.

OF PASTORAL POETRY.

576. THE object of Pastoral Poetry is to delight the imagination with descriptions of the beauties of nature, and of human life spent in the midst of these beauties, the persons possessing health, sensibility, and innocence, and undisturbed by the anxieties and cares of business and activity.

Obs. 1. The simple recapitulation of the principal objects of which such descriptions consist, communicates pleasing and exhilarating emotions. Zephyrs whispering through the trees and woods; rivulets gliding along their mossy banks; birds chaunting their lively notes; shepherds playing on their rural pipes; lambkins skipping after their dams; and the shepherdesses listening to the enchanting lays of their amorous swains.

2. The survey of pictures of innocence and happiness cannot fail to be agreeable, if the reader can be convinced of their reality. But, as he finds such descriptions continually falsified by experience, the poet artfully lays the scenes of his pastorals in remote places and ages, when, it is supposed, human life was less corrupted, and when shepherds and shepherdesses retained more refined sentiments, and more elevated rank, than persons of that character in modern times. If we wish to survey rural felicity in perfection, we must suppose ourselves transplanted into Sicily or Arcadia, where the pastoral life appeared in perfection, and where nature lavished all her stores to render the shepherd happy.

577. It is not sufficient, however, that the face of nature be lively and gay, the picture, to interest, must be animated with sentiment.

Illus. The shepherd must discover anxiety to obtain some object of importance to his happiness, or he must solace himself with the possession of it. He may signify his regret for the absence of a mistress or a friend; he may indulge in the hope to recover their society; he may sympathise with their misfortunes, or rejoice at their prosperity. But no violent feeling must be excited; no deep distress, or pungent sorrow must appear, which would produce vexation in the mind of the reader, because such a feeling would interfere with the gaiety and pleasant emotions naturally prompted by this kind of composition.

578. Attention also must be bestowed to preserve the pastoral character both in sentiment and in action.

Illus. The shepherds must not appear too learned or refined in their notions; neither must they display rudeness, cruelty, or indecency in their manners or words. Good sense, sensibility, observation of the striking beauties of nature, conjoined with simplicity and innocence, are the qualifications they must chiefly display.

579. A similar regard must be paid to local character, and national circumstances.

Illus. The British swain must not offer sacrifice to Pan, nor defend his flock against the lion and the wolf; he may, however, believe in the existence of invisible spirits or incantations, or fortify his lambs against the hound and the fox. In a word, the pastoral poet may indulge in every supposition which may render his pictures more beautiful, interesting, or sentimental: but he must not push his demands too far, nor shock the faith of his reader; he must not ask him to believe what is inconsistent or incredible.

580. Theocritus is the most early writer of pastorals. His works have descended to posterity, and he has been imitated by all his successors, particularly by Virgil.

Obs. 1. Theocritus was an inhabitant of Syracuse, in Sicily, about the time of Alexander the Great, and he has laid the scenes of all his poems in that delightful island. He paints nature, and delineates the sentiments and actions of his shepherds with great address. No pastoral writer has been more happy in striking the due medium between refinement and rudeness; and the use he makes of the Doric dialect, so admirably suited to the rusticity and simplicity of his characters, is none of the least marks of his merit.

2. Virgil succeeds Theocritus both in time and merit. Several of his pastorals are finished with good taste, simplicity, and propriety. No writer excels him in painting delicate sentiment, for which this kind of composition affords frequent opportunity.

Example 1. Nothing can be more simple and natural than the following lines:

"Tityre, dum redeo, brevis est via, pasce capellas:
Et potum pastas age, Tityre; et inter agendum
Occursare capro, cornu ferit ille, caveto."

Example 2. Again:

"Hic gelidi fontes: hic mollia prata, Lycori:
Hic nemus: hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo."

"Parta meæ veneri sunt munera; namque notavi
Ipse locum, aëriæ quo congessere palumbes."

Example 3. The two last lines are beautifully translated and improved by Shenstone:

"I have found out a gift for my fair,
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed:
But let me the plunder forbear,
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed."

Obs. 3. Not above the half, however, of ten eclogues, which Virgil has left, can properly be said to deserve the name of pastoral. Several of them, particularly the first and ninth, have little of that character. The third, fifth, seventh, and eighth only, can be said to belong strictly to this species of poetry; and though even in them the sentiments are sometimes too refined, yet they are never quaint or affected.

4. Pope has imitated, and almost translated, Theocritus and Virgil. His pastorals, accordingly, have little merit, but that of the versification. He has scarcely ventured to advance a single sentiment, of which he had not received a hint from the Sicilian or Roman poet. The subsequent examples will illustrate this remark.

Example 1. Virgil, with much simplicity, expresses a beautiful sentiment in the following lines:

"Malo me Galatea petit, lasciva puella,
Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri."

Example 2. Pope diminishes the effect of this thought, by adding to it an air of prettiness and conceit.

"The sprightly Sylvia trips along the green,
She runs, but hopes she does not run unseen,
While a kind glance at her pursuer flies,
How much at variance are her feet and eyes!"

Scholium. Pope wrote his pastorals when very young, which furnishes a good apology for their defects.

581. Among all the various poets, ancient or modern, who have attempted pastorals, Shenstone is entitled to the greatest praise. Neither Theocritus nor Virgil is, perhaps, to be compared with him, in combining the capital requisites of this kind of writing; for no author in this line has introduced with more success whatever is simple, tender, and delicate.

Obs. Even Shenstone's own works in this line are not equally meritorious. He degenerates sometimes into flatness and insipidity; but no language can furnish a performance of its kind superior to his pastoral ballad, in four parts, on Absence, Hope, Solitude, and Disappointment. No quaintness, no affectation, no false refinement, no indelicacy; all is nature, innocence, and elegance. The whole poem deserves high praise: as a short specimen, we shall present the following lines, from the part denominated Hope.

"One would think she might like to retire
To the bower I had labour'd to rear;
Not a shrub that I heard her admire,
But I hasted and planted it there.

Oh! how sudden the jessamine strove
With the lilac, to render it gay;
Already it calls for my love,
To prune the wild branches away.

I have found out a gift for my fair,
I have found where the wood-pigeons breed;
But let me the plunder forbear,
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed:

For he ne'er could be true, she averr'd,
Who could rob a poor bird of its young;
And I lov'd her the more when I heard
Such tenderness fall from her tongue."

582. The favourable reception which pastoral poetry has obtained from all polished nations, and the picture it is supposed to exhibit of the happy but fabulous times of the golden age, have prompted some eminent authors to attempt to improve it. They have retained the pastoral characters, occupations, and manners, and to these have added importance and interest, by moulding them into a beautiful and picturesque sentimental comedy. As a farther enhance-

ment of its merit, they have made music contribute liberally to adorn it, and have introduced a number of tender characteristic songs, in which the shepherds and shepherdesses signify to one another their hopes and wishes, accompanied with correspondent airs of melody.

Obs. 1. Few entertainments can present an assemblage of so many captivating objects, beautiful pictures of nature; the charms of music, which touch the heart; characters pleased, cheerful, and happy, engaged in those simple cares and attachments, which occupy human life, without fatiguing it; and which, being dictated by innocence and restrained by virtue, gently agitate, without distracting the mind. Attempts of merit of this sort have accordingly been honoured with the warmest approbation.

2. Italy furnishes two eminent specimens, which all Europe has read and admired. The Amynta of Tasso, and Pastor Fido of Guarini. Both display vivid pictures of nature, and of rural manners. The fables are interesting, and happily conducted; the characters are thrown into many delicate and tender situations. Many of the scenes are beautiful, and wrought up with so much sensibility, that the reader receives a very exquisite amusement.

583. The Gentle Shepherd, a Scottish pastoral comedy, of Allan Ramsay, is admired by every reader of taste and genius. The author has exerted much pains to avoid the reprehensible qualities of his two rivals, and every candid critic must allow that he has been successful.

Obs. 1. That he might suggest an apology for the greater liberality of sentiment which he has ventured to throw into the characters of his principal shepherd and shepherdess, he has supposed them to inherit a genius superior to their station, communicated from their parents, who possessed a more elevated rank, but who, from political misfortunes, were obliged to permit their children to be educated in concealment and obscurity.

2. In every other view, his pastoral is entitled to much praise. The fable is well conceived, naturally and regularly conducted. The characters are distinctly marked; they are numerous, and properly varied. Their occupations, sentiments, manners, are all the most picturesque, local, and characteristic, that can be supposed. Simplicity, innocence, cheerfulness, rustic sports and merriment, rude prejudices, opinions, and fears, are beautifully and pertinently interspersed. The situations of the principal characters are delicate and interesting, and deeply engage the attention of the reader. The great change of fortune, and the consequent happiness they enjoy from the accidental discovery of their birth and opulence in the course of the action, terminate the performance, by suggesting the most pleasing and satisfactory frame of mind, the reader could wish to possess. The music is national, tender, simple, and the diction is perfectly suited to the characters. It is finished in the true Doric taste, soft and expressive, neither too refined, nor too gross and unpolished.

3. Dr. Blair was the first who prejudiced the public taste against the Gentle Shepherd. Barron has followed him in this, as, indeed, in almost every other thing the doctor said. But let it be observed, that

the Gentle Shepherd is a *national pastoral;* the locality of its manners and language, make it such; they constitute its chief ingredients of national merit; they increase its interest by circumscribing its reputation among the people for whom it was written. "Had its manners been general, its language pure *English*, and its scenes Arcadian, it would have had less characteristic beauty, but it might have merited the applause of Europe.*" Indeed! There are hills and dales, woods and streams, and sentient natures, in Britain; and Arcadia could boast no more. At all events, there is one national pastoral in the world; or, in other words, the glory of this species of poetry hath not fallen with the genius of Greece.

584. Of all the moderns, M. Gessner, a poet of Switzerland, has been the most successful in his pastoral compositions. He has introduced into his Idylls (as he entitles them) many new ideas. His rural scenery is often striking, and his descriptions are lively.

Obs. He presents pastoral life to us, with all the embellishments of which it is susceptible; but without any excess of refinement. What forms the chief merit of this poet, is, that he writes to the heart; and he has enriched the subject of his Idylls with incidents which give rise to much tender sentiment. Scenes of domestic felicity are beautifully painted. The mutual affection of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, as well as of lovers, are displayed in a pleasing and touching manner.

CHAPTER IV.

LYRIC POETRY.

585. LYRIC poetry, to which we now proceed, included, in ancient times, every poetical composition accompanied with music, whether of the voice or of instruments.

Illus. 1. It was called lyric, from the lyre, with which it was commonly attended; and it acquired the name of ode, because it was also designed to be sung. It is a short, occasional, animated effort of genius.

2. The author may assume any tone he chooses; he may be sublime, familiar, gay, serious, passionate, moral, tender, or witty, with equal propriety, and he may even intermix several of these strains in the same poem.

3. Panegyric, however, is the principal field it has occupied in all ages; for the praises of the gods, and of heroes, have furnished more odes than all other subjects put together.

Example 1. The Psalms of David were lyric productions, and were sung in the celebration of the Jewish worship.

2. The Odes of Pindar were composed in praise of the gods, or heroes, or victors in the games of Greece.

3. Some of those of Horace are dedicated to the honour of the gods, others form elegant complimentary addresses to his country, to eminent individuals, or to friends.

* Blair.

Obs. Modern times have not been so prolific in this species of composition, as those of antiquity; they are not, however, destitute of some very conspicuous specimens.

586. Lyric poetry is susceptible of different ornaments, suitable to the nature of the subjects it treats. It admits sometimes the boldest and warmest figures of imagination and passion; at other times, it delights in the playful and pleasant images of fancy and feeling. Sometimes the expression is ardent, concise, and vehement; at other times, it is simple and diffuse; but at all times, it must be pure, picturesque, and correct.

Obs. 1. The style should be more finished, perhaps, than that of any other species of poetry; for the attention of the reader is neither powerfully nor long diverted by the sentiment. He soon turns it toward the expression; and he is so scrupulous, that he will not excuse the slightest impropriety. The capital characteristics of the ode, then, are magnificence, or passion or ingenuity in the thought, and perfect elegance in the style.

2. Greece has left some conspicuous monuments of lyric composition, in the odes of Pindar, Sappho, and Anacreon; the first remarkable for vehemence and sublimity; the two last for sensibility, pleasantry, and vivacity.

3. Horace is the only Roman poet of the lyric tribe whose works have descended to modern times; and, it seems, we have little reason to regret the loss of the rest, for, if we may rely on the opinion of Quinctilian, Horace alone merited immortality.

587. No modern poets have composed volumes of odes like Pindar and Horace, but many of them have occasionally attempted this species of composition. The chief of these in English are Dryden, Pope, Addison, Gray, and Akenside.

Obs. 1. The first three are distinguished by their odes to St. Cecilia, in praise of the powers of music; the subjects of the last two are miscellaneous. As the first three have attempted successively to adorn the same theme, it affords a good opportunity of comparing their merits.

2. Alexander's Feast, by Dryden, has gained universal fame, and it seems to deserve all the reputation it has attained. It is difficult to decide whether the sentiments or the composition merit the most praise. The sentiments are admirably suited to the personages whom they describe, and the composition is fitted with equal propriety to the sentiments. The sentiments are artfully contrasted, a circumstance which, added to their natural excellence, displays them in the most captivating light.

3. A train of grand and sublime thoughts is succeeded by a series of gay and pleasant ones; a set of outrageous and furious conceptions, is contrasted with a group of gentle and tender ones. The poet shakes the spheres with Jupiter, revels with Bacchus, raves and destroys with the furies, and drops a tear with his hero over the misfortunes of Darius.

4. Pope has attempted, in his ode in honour of St. Cecilia, the inventress of the organ, to introduce different passions, and to contrast

both the sentiments and the versification, as had been done by Dryden. He has very happily selected for his subject the fable of Orpheus and Eurydice, a story naturally tender and pathetic, of which the reverse of fortune is great, and the different parts are strongly opposed.

5. Addison was fond of the fame of a poet, though he enjoyed not the best powers for acquiring it. He wished, it is said, to rival Pope as a translator of Homer; he even wished to rival him in lyric merit. He ventured to appear on the same ground which Pope and Dryden had occupied with so much lustre; and his ode to St. Cecilia exhibited him in a contrast which could not fail to hurt his reputation; for of all the poetry which Addison has written, he has scarcely composed any thing so indifferent as this ode.

6. The odes of Gray are entitled to high praise, though they are unequal in their merit, which is also the fate of different stanzas of the same ode. His sentiments are conceived with great vigour and propriety, and his versification is the most laboured, perhaps, in the English language. He frequently attempts the Pindaric magnificence and sublimity, and he never fails to appropriate some of its darkness and obscurity.

7. Akenside aims at ease, ingenuity, and elegance, and he is not unsuccessful. His imagination is delicate and picturesque, his versification is smooth and melodious. He is not defective in sentiment, and in ornament he has a claim to high applause.

CHAPTER V.

DIDACTIC POETRY.

588. **DIDACTIC** poetry discusses some branch of useful science, some beneficial art, or some system of prudential or moral conduct, by which the reader may improve his knowledge, his wisdom, or his virtue; and it recommends the discussion by all the merits of imagination, and all the charms of poetical composition.

Illus. 1. In executing the useful part of the task, it collects all the best theories and most approved practices, and arranges them, with the reasons of them, in that distinct and lucid order in which they are most likely to make the deepest impression. It sometimes adds the most sagacious reflections, pleasant speculations, or important discoveries, which have resulted from the research or the ingenuity of the author. It condescends also to recapitulate and expose vulgar or irrational principles and practices; which have derived their origin from a necessity, perhaps, that no longer exists, or which remain fostered and cherished by prejudice or by ignorance.

2. In executing the ornamental parts, it illustrates every theory and practice with simplicity and vivacity; but that the familiarity or the lowliness of the topics of which it must sometimes treat, may not offend the nicest reader, it is extremely solicitous to add dignity to the illustration by the use of figurative and descriptive phraseology. It

seldom calls common objects by their proper names. It employs elevated and metaphorical appellations, or it describes them by their causes or their effects. It bestows much attention to enliven its descriptions and scenes, by throwing into them all the animation with which they are any way connected. Many of the inanimate objects are personified; all the irrational animals are endued with character, sentiment, and design; the human actors are rendered respectable by the activity and virtue of their lives, the sagacity of their judgments, the utility of their occupations; or they are held up as objects of aversion, that the reader may learn, from their folly, absurdity or criminality, to avoid that conduct which has rendered them ridiculous, odious, or unhappy.

3. But the great ornaments of didactic poetry are beautiful or interesting episodes. To vary and adorn his subject, the author is allowed frequently to shift the scene, and to introduce any moral, philosophical, or sentimental relation or discussion with which it is connected. No other species of poetry admits so much latitude in this article. If the episodes are properly varied in length, and if they are not very violently forced into his service, the author will not incur much reprehension, though he often depart from his principal subject, and though the sum of the episodes, taken together, even exceed in extent the didactic part of the poem.

4. Through the whole of his poem, the author may display much knowledge of the particular subject he treats, and of many other useful and ornamental sciences and arts; much acquaintance with nature, society, manners, and the human heart. He may be grave, gay, sublime, easy, austere, pathetic, as shall best suit his genius and his matter. The versification must be always correct and melodious; and it may be elevated occasionally to a high degree of energy and dignity. It is also susceptible of every ornament, addressed to the imagination or the passions, of which the different topics or episodes admit. Metaphors, comparisons, personifications, apostrophes, may all be incidentally introduced; and if they are pertinently applied, their appearance will add grace and interest to the composition.

Scholia 1. When this species of poetry promises so much improvement and entertainment to the reader, and when the author possesses so many favourable opportunities of displaying his knowledge, his genius, and his taste, we will not be surprised that it has been attempted by poets of high fame in different ages. Aratus discussed in Greek the phenomena of the heavens, and Lucretius in Latin the philosophy of Epicurus. Virgil has treated the whole theory and practice of agriculture, and Armstrong the art of preserving health. The writers on morals and manners are mostly satirical; yet Pope has avoided satirism in his elegant system of morals in the Essay on Man. The capital satirists, ancient and modern, are Horace, Juvenal, Pope, and Young.

2. Armstrong possessed a large portion of the genius of Virgil, and, like him, has adorned the history of health, a subject naturally unpromising, with all the embellishment of fine versification and elegant fancy. He elevates and beautifies every precept, and he is fortunate in episodes. The true spirit of poetry is conspicuous in all he writes, and his compositions cannot be perused without instruction and pleasure. He appears to be one of the best didactic poets in the English language, and not inferior to any ancient author in the same line, except Virgil.

3. The Essay on Man admitted fewer embellishments and episodes than the poems which we have mentioned. The author's design was more serious than that of any other writer of his class. Instruction was his main object, and no ornaments are introduced but what are manifestly subservient to this end. He employs metaphors frequently, and sometimes comparisons, but they are never mere addresses to the fancy of the reader, they always contribute to illustrate and impress the matter.

4. This famous essay is literally a system of morals, founded on the celebrated doctrine first broached by Plato, and afterwards explained and recommended by Leibnitz and Lord Shaftsbury, that no evil is admitted into the system of nature but what is inseparable from its existence; and that all possible provision is made for the happiness of every creature it contains. The author acknowledges that the gravity of his subject was more adapted to a discussion in prose, than a treatise in verse, but that he preferred the latter, because it was more adapted to his genius, and was more likely to engage the attention and recollection of the reader.

5. The discussion is ingenious and instructive We, however, desiderate that distinct and lucid arrangement which we discern in the productions of the other two eminent moderns. Neither has the versification all the merits which shine in his other works; it is frequently abrupt, if not obscure, and possesses not the melody and flow of his other poetry. The abstract nature of the subject, perhaps, and his sincere desire to instruct, rather than to please, may furnish an apology.

589. SATIRISTS are a species of negative didactic poets, who teach and amuse by censuring what is wrong, and exposing what is foolish. They seldom attempt to inculcate positively what is good, or to recommend what is decent; they leave this task to moralists and public instructors. They would be most reputable and useful writers, were they successful in what they undertake, to banish iniquity and folly from society. They are divided into two classes.

Illus. 1. One class attacks immorality and impropriety with a stern look and severe reprehension. It paints them in all their deformity as objects of aversion, and it fails not to inflict upon them that censure which they deserve. It allows few of those excuses and alleviations which are usually urged for the errors of men. It delineates them as bad as they really are, and is sometimes inclined rather to exaggerate than to apologise. It wishes to deter mankind from vicious or foolish actions or sentiments, by the odium, the misery, the disapprobation which attend them.

2. The other class assaults vice and folly with ridicule. It exposes the whims, the oddities, the absurdities, and the crimes of men, in such a manner as to make them ashamed. But if ridicule does not succeed, it relinquishes them as incorrigible. An author of this class is never angry, he is never even serious. When a crime should rouse the resentment of the former class, and draw from them severe chastisement, they remain unmoved, and smile at the culprit as a fool. Horace altogether, and Pope in some measure, are satirists of the latter class; Juvenal and Young belong to the former.

3. Horace was an epicurean in philosophy, and, according to the principles of that indolent sect, seems to have adopted a rule of conduct, that nothing should ruffle his temper. He appears to have considered the vices of his countrymen as not deserving his resentment; or to have been of opinion that reprehension was not the way to reform them. He accordingly never discomposes himself when he mentions them.

4. Juvenal is a grave, severe satirist, and a stern censor of the errors and follies of mankind. He never condescends to smile, or to insinuate improprieties without reprehending them. He seems to consider ceremony and politeness as marks of insincerity, and as trifling with the evil, instead of attempting a radical cure. He seldom takes notice of folly, but, when he does, he touches her airy and volatile form with a firm and rough hand. He thinks her deserving of more serious treatment than to laugh at her, because she may be either the companion or the parent of iniquity. He displays, at the same time, much good sense, much knowledge of the world, and a great share of the faculty of imagination.

5. Pope attempts to unite the good humour of Horace with the gravity of Juvenal, but he leans more to the manner of the latter, than to that of the former. He was naturally of a keen temper, and particularly irritable by reflections which glanced either at his private character or his fame. Many of his satirical writings were prompted by this spirit; and we regret that a man of his genius should have wasted his time, and disturbed his repose, by retaliating on critics animated by a degree of ignorance or folly which rendered them contemptible.

6. Young has much merit as a satirist. He is not so severe as Juvenal, though he is always in earnest, and never attempts to excite a laugh. He appears as a sincere moralist, zealous to correct the vices and follies of mankind, by holding up pictures to excite their reflection on the impropriety of their errors. His Love of Fame displays much knowledge of human nature, and no small merit in point of versification. He is a satirist whom we love and respect, because we conceive him to be actuated by good nature, and backward to reprehend, were it possible to reform by more gentle means. He possesses neither the sprightliness of Horace, nor the vehemence of Juvenal, but he is more dignified than the former, and more amiable than the latter. He is not so facetious and pleasant as Horace, but neither is he so sour and forbidding as Juvenal. Horace seems to have consulted his own amusement, and Juvenal the gratification of his spleen, as much as the entertainment or emolument of their readers. Young writes to improve mankind, and, with the regard and affection of a parent, chastises only that he may amend. Though we wish he had more mirth, yet we respect him as an useful author, and a genuine friend of virtue.

CHAPTER VI.

DESCRIPTIVE POETRY.

590. **DESCRIPTIVE** poetry is addressed chiefly to the imagination, though it attempts also to convey many useful impressions to the understanding and the heart.

Obs. The design of it is to exhibit beautiful pictures of nature or art, so as to communicate all the information and pleasure which the reader could receive from an actual survey of the objects. It sometimes presents large collections of objects, as those which occur in one period of the year, or those which readily present themselves when the mind is in a particular frame, lively and gay, or disconsolate and dejected.

Illus. 1. Of the former kind are the Seasons of Thomson; of the latter kind are the Allegro and Penseroso of Milton. But the greater part of descriptive poetry is intermixed with other kinds of poetical composition; and there is no kind, whether epic, dramatic, didactic, pastoral, or lyric, that does not occasionally demand its assistance.

2. Though all poets attempt to describe, and all men are endowed more or less with the power of forming pictures of what they have seen or imagined, yet the faculty which produces good description is extremely rare; it requires an uncommon portion of vivacity and vigour of imagination, and a large share of judgment. The former suggests the circumstances which the picture demands, and the latter selects those which are best calculated for making the deepest impression.

591. In description, the great art seems to be, not to specify every minute particular, but to select the most striking and picturesque circumstances, which would naturally make the deepest impression on the mind of the beholder.

Example. The following quotation will best illustrate this rule. It is a picture, by Thomson, of an infectious distemper, which happened to the fleet in the memorable expedition against Carthagena.

" ———You, gallant Vernon, saw
The miserable scene. You pitying saw
To infant weakness sunk the warrior's arm;
Saw the deep-racking pang, the ghastly form,
The pale lip quivering, and the beamless eye
No more with ardour bright! You heard the groans
Of agonising ships from shore to shore!
Heard nightly plung'd amid the sullen wave
The frequent corse; while on each other fix'd
In sad presage, the blank assistants seem'd
Silent, to ask whom fate would next demand!"

Analysis. It is unnecessary to offer any comment on this beautiful description; every reader must feel its force. The frequent plunging of the corse in the sullen wave during the night, is particularly striking, and marks strongly the havoc of the infection.

Obs. 1. Almost the whole merit of Thomson's genius consisted in description. He possessed little influence over the stronger passions,

though some episodes in the Seasons, and scenes in his plays, discover a capacity for managing a tender and moderate passion. His plays are elegant and correct compositions; they contain many noble and virtuous sentiments, but they are sparing of incidents, and they abound with declamation.

2. Had Milton studied nature with as much attention as Thomson, he would probably have excelled all poets in the liveliness and beauty of his descriptions. All his works shine with the richness of his imagination. He is uncommonly happy in the selection of the most pertinent circumstances, and in the use of the most significant figures, particularly metaphors, which demonstrate the exquisite sensibility of his fancy.

3. He seems, however, to have taken a general survey of nature, rather than to have attended minutely to her particular operations. He never dwells long on a topic in description, and he rather glances at it than delineates it. But no author surpasses him in selecting the most prominent and picturesque ingredients of a figure which make the deepest impression. He is never general or diffuse, qualities which are found to be very hostile to the success of this species of writing.

Example 1. He thus describes the scenes of morning in the Allegro.

"To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise:
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stately struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn;
While the ploughman near at hand
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
And the milk-maid singing blythe,
And the mower whets his scythe;
And every shepherd tells his tale,
Under the hawthorn in the dale."

Example 2. The Penseroso presents the following account of the objects of the evening.

"Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar.
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm;
Or let my lamp and midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tow'r.
Sometimes let gorgeous tragedy,
In sceptre'd pall, come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes' or Pelop's line,
Or the tale of Troy divine."

Obs. 4. The elegant genius of Parnell has produced some beautiful examples of descriptive poetry; and it is much to be regretted he had not indulged the world with more specimens. He possessed a fine imagination, a most correct taste, and great knowledge of human nature. His versification is not inferior to that of Pope in melody and concise-

ness, and is superior in simplicity and perspicuity. It teems with instruction, with the genuine language of the heart; and there is no poetry, perhaps, which the reader can peruse so often with pleasure.

Example 1. The Hermit is an extremely beautiful, moral, descriptive poem, fraught with important instruction, communicated in a simple, but dignified manner, and recommended by the most delicate appeals to the imagination.

2. All the great epic poets exhibit eminent specimens of descriptive poetry. Homer, Virgil, and Ossian, excel in it. The following picture of desolation, by Ossian, is conceived with much vigour of imagination.

"I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The flames had resounded in the halls, and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its course by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook there its lonely head; the moss whistled in the wind. The fox looked out from the window, and the rank grass of the wall waved round his head. Desolate is the dwelling of Morna; silence is in the house of her fathers!"

592. The chief errors committed in descriptions, are the admission of unmeaning or supernumerary epithets and phrases, the introduction of general terms, and the intermixture of trivial or insignificant circumstances clothed in pompous and splendid language. The best poets are sometimes faulty in all these articles.

Illus. 1. All general terms are improper in descriptions, because they suggest either no idea at all, or none that is fixed; while the essence of picturesque description consists in prompting conceptions which are palpable, and of which the mind, of course, takes firm hold. These can result only from objects particular and distinct.

Example. Shakspeare, to expose the absurdity of attempting a thing impracticable, says, with great energy, in Henry the Fifth: "You may as well go about to turn the sun into ice, by fanning in his face with a peacock's feather."

Analysis. Had the poet made the expression general, by leaving out the "peacock's feather," he would have mutilated the picture, and debilitated the impression. How feeble would have been the following phraseology? "You may as well go about to turn the sun into ice, by fanning in his face." Had he retained the "feather," but dropt the "peacock," the expression would have been more picturesque: "You may as well go about to turn the sun into ice, by fanning his face with a feather." Even this picture, however, is much inferior in beauty and vivacity to the particular language the poet hath thought proper to adopt: "You may as well go about to turn the sun into ice, by fanning in his face with a peacock's feather." The mind grasps the image at once, and is struck with its sprightliness and propriety.

593. Forced elevation of the expression above the tone of the thought, is another error not uncommon in description.

Illus. Homer relates, that Achilles commanded his domestics to prepare a vessel to heat water for washing the dead body of Patroclus, which they accordingly performed. Nothing can be more simple than the language of the poet. Things are called by their proper names, and very few epithets are added. Pope must improve this simple

phraseology, and he has communicated to it an air of ridicule, by the pompous and figurative expression of his translation. Iliad, xviii. 405.

"A massy cauldron of stupendous frame
They brought, and plac'd it o'er the rising flame;
Then heap'd the lighted wood; the flame divides
Beneath the vase, and climbs around its sides.
In its wide womb they pour the rushing stream,
The boiling water bubbles to the brim."

594. It often happens, that a description presents objects which would be extremely disagreeable to the sight, while the description itself is not only not disagreeable, but conveys high pleasure. This is a curious phænomenon, and merits some attention. Two causes seem to concur in producing this effect.

Illus. A poetical description resembles an historical painting, the merit of which consists in communicating to the different figures the same positions and appearance that they hold in nature. And although the figures be disagreeable, yet the picture may yield much pleasure, because the merit of it lies in the accuracy of the imitation. The mind surveys with delight the excellence of an art which can imitate nature so completely. The purpose of the description, as well as of the picture, is to impart exact ideas of the objects, though it operates by words instead of colours. The imitation, in both cases, is the chief source of the pleasure. The pleasure of the imitation much more than counterbalances the disgust arising from the inspection of the object. This seems to be the first cause. Words, again, have a beauty in their sound and arrangement, independent of their signification; the merit of the execution in the picture, and of the composition in the description, affords delight. This seems to be the second cause. Both causes concur to counteract the disgust excited by the object.

Scholium. These remarks point out the greatest beauty of description, which takes place when the object, the imitation, and the expression, all concur to augment the pleasure of the reader. In all other cases, these partially oppose the effects of one another.

If, however, an object prompt horror, no excellence of imitation or language can recommend its description. The picture of Sin, in Paradise Lost, though drawn with the brightest colours, is of this class. It excites horror, and all Milton's eloquence cannot render it tolerable.

CHAPTER VII.

EPIC POETRY.

595. EPIC and dramatic poetry are universally allowed to be the most dignified, and, at the same time, the most difficult species of poetic composition. To contrive a story which shall please and interest all readers, by being at once entertaining, important, and instructive; to fill it with suit-

able incidents; to enliven it with a variety of characters, and of descriptions; and, throughout a long work, to maintain that propriety of sentiment, and that elevation of style, which the epic character requires, is unquestionably the highest effort of poetical genius. Hence so very few have succeeded in the attempt, that strict critics will hardly allow any other poems to bear the name of epic, except the Iliad and the Æneid.

Illus. 1. The plain account of the nature of an epic poem is, the recital of some illustrious enterprize in a poetical form. This is an exact definition of this subject. It comprehends several other poems, besides the Iliad of Homer, the Æneid of Virgil, and the Jerusalem of Tasso; which are, perhaps, the three most regular and complete epic works that ever were composed. But to exclude all poems from the epic class, which are not formed exactly upon the same model as these, is the pedantry of criticism.

2. We can give exact definitions and descriptions of minerals, plants, and animals; and can arrange them with precision, under the different classes to which they belong, because nature affords a visible unvarying standard, to which we refer them. But with regard to works of taste and imagination, where nature has fixed no standard, but leaves scope for beauties of many different kinds, it is absurd to attempt defining and limiting them with the same precision.

3. Criticism, when employed in such attempts, degenerates into trifling questions about words and names only.

4. The most competent judges, therefore, have no scruple to class such poems, as Milton's Paradise Lost, Lucan's Pharsalia, Statius's Thebaid, Ossian's Fingal and Temora, Camoens' Lusiad, Voltaire's Henriade, Fenelon's Telemachus, Glover's Leonidas, and Wilkie's Epigoniad, under the same species of composition with the Iliad and the Æneid; though some of them approach much nearer than others to the perfection of these celebrated works. They are, undoubtedly, all epic; that is, poetical recitals of great adventures; which is all that is meant by this denomination of poetry. (*Illus.* 1.)

5. The end which epic poetry proposes, is to extend our ideas of human perfection: or, in other words, to excite admiration. Now this can be accomplished only by proper representations of heroic deeds, and virtuous characters. For high virtue is the object, which all mankind are formed to admire; and, therefore, epic poems are, and must be, favourable to the cause of virtue. Valour, truth, justice, fidelity, friendship, piety, magnanimity, are the objects which, in the course of such compositions, are presented to our minds, under the most splendid and honourable colours.

6. In behalf of virtuous personages, our affections are engaged; in their designs, and their distresses, we are interested; the generous and public affections are awakened; the mind is purified from sensual and mean pursuits, and accustomed to take part in great, heroic enterprises. It is, indeed, no small testimony in honour of virtue, that several of the most refined and elegant entertainments of mankind, such as that species of poetical composition which we now consider, must be grounded on moral sentiments and impressions. This is a testimony of such weight, that, were it in the power of sceptical philosophers, to weaken the force of those reasonings which establish the

essential distinctions between vice and virtue, the writings of epic poets alone were sufficient to refute their false philosophy; shewing, by that appeal which they constantly make to the feelings of mankind in favour of virtue, that the foundations of it are laid deep and strong in human nature.

596. The general strain and spirit of epic composition, sufficiently mark its distinction from the other kinds of poetry.

Illus. 1. In pastoral writing, the reigning idea is innocence and tranquillity. Compassion is the great object of tragedy; ridicule the province of comedy. The predominant character of the epic is, admiration excited by heroic actions.

2. It is sufficiently distinguished from history, both by its poetical form, and the liberty of fiction which it assumes. It is a more calm composition than tragedy. It admits, nay, requires, the pathetic and the violent, on particular occasions; but the pathetic is not expected to be its general character. It requires, more than any other species of poetry, a grave, equal, and supported dignity.

8. It takes in a greater compass of time and action, than dramatic writing admits; and thereby allows a more full display of characters. Dramatic writings display characters chiefly by means of sentiments and passions; epic poetry, chiefly by means of actions. The emotions, therefore, which it raises, are not so violent, but they are more prolonged.

Obs. These are the general characteristics of this species of composition. But, in order to give a more particular and critical view of it, let us consider the epic poem under three heads; first, with respect to the subject, or action; secondly, with respect to the actors, or characters; and, lastly, with respect to the narration of the poet.

597. The action, or subject of the epic poem, must have three qualifications: it must be *one;* it must be *great;* it must be *interesting.*

Illus. 1. First, it must be one action, or enterprise, which the poet chooses for his subject.

Example 1. In all the great epic poems, unity of action is sufficiently apparent. Virgil, for instance, has chosen for his subject, the establishment of Æneas in Italy. From the beginning to the end of the poem, this object is ever in our view, and links all the parts of it together with full connection. The unity of the Odyssey is of the same nature; the return and re-establishment of Ulysses in his own country. The subject of Tasso is the recovery of Jerusalem from the Infidels; that of Milton, the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise; and both of them are unexceptionable in the unity of the story.

2. The professed subject of the Iliad, is the anger of Achilles, with the consequences which it produced. The Greeks carry on many unsuccessful engagements against the Trojans, as long as they are deprived of the assistance of Achilles. Upon his being appeased and reconciled to Agamemnon, victory follows, and the poem closes.

Analysis. It must be owned, however, that the unity, or connecting principle, is not quite so sensible to the imagination here, as in the Æneid. For, throughout many books of the Iliad, Achilles is out of

sight; he is lost in inaction; and the fancy dwells on no other object than the success of the two armies that we see contending in war.

Illus. 2. The unity of the epic action is not to be so strictly interpreted, as if it excluded all episodes, or subordinate actions.

3. Episodes, are certain actions, or incidents, introduced into the narration, connected with the principal action, yet not of such importance as to destroy the main subject of the poem, if they had been omitted.

Example. Of this nature are the interview of Hector with Andromache, in the Iliad; the story of Caucus, and that of Nisus and Euryalus, in the Æneid; the adventures of Tancred with Erminia and Clorinda, in the Jerusalem; and the prospect of his descendants exhibited to Adam, in the last books of Paradise Lost.

598. Such episodes as these, are not only permitted to an epic poet; but, provided they be properly executed, are great ornaments to his work. The rules regarding them are the following:

599. Rule first. They must be naturally introduced; they must have a sufficient connection with the subject of the poem; they must be inferior parts that belong to it; but not mere appendages stuck to it.

Illus. The episode of Olinda and Sophronia, in the second book of Tasso's Jerusalem, is faulty, by transgressing this rule. It is too much detached from the rest of the work; and being introduced so near the opening of the poem, misleads the reader into an expectation, that it is to be of some future consequence; whereas it proves to be connected with nothing that follows. In proportion as any episode is slightly related to the main subject, it should always be the shorter. The passion of Dido in the Æneid, and the snares of Armida in the Jerusalem, which are expanded so fully in these poems, cannot with propriety be called episodes. They are constituent parts of the work, and form a considerable share of the intrigue of the poem.

600. Rule second. Episodes ought to present to us, objects of a different kind, from those which go before, and those which follow, in the course of the poem. For it is principally for the sake of variety, that episodes are introduced into an epic composition. In so long a work, they tend to diversify the subject, and to relieve the reader, by shifting the scene. In the midst of combats, therefore, an episode of the martial kind would be out of place; whereas, Hector's visit to Andromache in the Iliad, and Erminia's adventure with the shepherd, in the seventh book of the Jerusalem, affords us a well-judged and pleasing retreat from camps and battles.

601. Rule third. As an episode is a professed *embellishment*, it ought to be particularly *elegant* and *well-finished*; and, accordingly, it is, for the most part, in pieces of this kind, that poets put forth their strength. The episodes of

Teribazus and Ariana, in Leonidas, and of the death of Hercules, in the Epigoniad, are the two greatest beauties in these poems

602. The *unity* of the epic action necessarily supposes, that the action be *entire* and *complete;* that is, as Aristotle well expresses it, that it have a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Illus. Either by relating the whole, in his own person, or by introducing some of his actors to relate what had passed before the opening of the poem, the author must always contrive to give us full information of every thing that belongs to his subject; he must not leave our curiosity, in any article, ungratified; he must bring us precisely to the accomplishment of his plan; and then conclude.

603. The second qualification of an epic action, is, that it be *great;* that it have sufficient splendour and importance, both to fix our attention, and to justify the magnificent apparatus which the poet bestows upon it.

Obs. This is so evidently requisite as not to require illustration; and indeed, hardly any who have attempted epic poetry, have failed in choosing some subject sufficiently important, either by the nature of the action, or by the fame of the personages concerned in it.

604. It contributes to the grandeur of the epic subject, that it be *not* of a modern date, nor fall within any period of history with which we are intimately acquainted.

Obs. Both Lucan and Voltaire have, in the choice of their subjects, transgressed this rule, and they have, upon that account, succeeded worse. Antiquity is favourable to those high and august ideas which epic poetry is designed to raise. It tends to aggrandize, in our imagination, both persons and events; and what is still more material, it allows the poet the liberty of adorning his subject by means of fiction. Whereas, as soon as he comes within the verge of real and authenticated history, this liberty is abridged.

605. The third property required in the epic poem, is, that it be *interesting.* It is not sufficient for this purpose that it be great. For deeds of mere valour, how heroic soever, may prove cold and tiresome.

Illus. Much will depend on the happy choice of some subject, which shall, by its nature, interest the public: as when the poet selects for his hero, one who is the founder, or the deliverer, or the favourite of his nation; or when he writes of achievements that have been highly celebrated, or have been connected with important consequences to any public cause. Most of the great epic poems are abundantly fortunate in this respect, and were, no doubt, as interesting to those ages and countries in which they were composed, as they are to us.

606. But the chief circumstance which renders an epic poem interesting, and which tends to interest, not one age

or country alone, but all readers, is the skilful conduct of the author in the management of his subject.

Illus. He must so contrive his plan, as that it shall comprehend many affecting incidents. He must not dazzle us perpetually with valiant achievements; for all readers become tired of constant fighting, and battles; but he must study to touch our hearts. He may sometimes be awful and august; he must often be tender and pathetic; he must give us gentle and pleasing scenes of love, friendship, and affection. The more an epic poem abounds with situations which awaken the feelings of humanity, the more interesting it is: and these always form the favourite passages of the work. No epic poets are more happy in this respect than Virgil and Tasso.

607. Much, too, depends on the characters of the heroes, for rendering the poem interesting; that they be such as shall strongly attach the readers, and make them take part in the dangers which the heroes encounter.

Illus. These dangers, or obstacles, form what is called the nodus, or the intrigue of the epic poem; in the judicious conduct of which consists much of the poet's art. He must rouse our attention by a prospect of the difficulties which seem to threaten disappointment to the enterprise of his favourite personages; he must make these difficulties grow and thicken upon us, by degrees; till, after having kept us, for some time, in a state of agitation and suspense, he paves the way, by a proper preparation of incidents, for the winding up of the plot in a natural and probable manner. It is plain, that every tale which is designed to engage attention, must be conducted on a plan of this sort.

608. A question has been moved, Whether the nature of the epic poem does not require that it should always end successfully? Most critics are inclined to think, that a successful issue is the most proper; and they appear to have reason on their side. An unhappy conclusion depresses the mind, and is opposite to the elevating emotions which belong to this species of poetry.

609. With regard to the time or duration of the epic action, no precise boundaries can be ascertained. A considerable extent is always allowed to it, as it does not necessarily depend on those violent passions which can be supposed to have only a short continuance.

Illus. The Iliad, which is formed upon the anger of Achilles, has, with propriety, the shortest duration of any of the great epic poems. According to Bossu, the action lasts no longer than forty-seven days. The action of the Odyssey, computed from the taking of Troy to the peace of Ithaca, extends to eight years and a half; and the action of the Æneid, computed in the same way, from the taking of Troy to the death of Turnus, includes about six years. But if we measure the period only of the poet's own narration, or compute from the time in which the hero makes his first appearance, till the conclusion, the duration of both these last poems is brought within a much smaller com-

pass. The Odyssey, beginning with Ulysses in the island of Calypso, comprehends fifty-eight days only; and the Æneid, beginning with the storm, which throws Æneas upon the coast of Africa, is reckoned to include, at the most, a year and some months.

Obs. Having thus treated of the epic action, or the subject of the poem, we proceed next to make some observations on the actors or personages.

610. As it is the business of an epic poet to copy after nature, and to form a probable interesting tale, he must study to give all his personages proper and well-supported characters, such as display the features of the human nature. This is what Aristotle calls, giving manners to the poem.

Obs. It is by no means necessary, that all his actors be morally good; imperfect, nay, vicious characters, may find a proper place; though the nature of epic poetry seems to require, that the principal figures exhibited should be such as tend to raise admiration and love, rather than hatred or contempt. But whatever the character be which a poet gives to any of his actors, he must take care to preserve it uniform, and consistent with itself. Every thing which that person says, or does, must be suited to this uniformity, and must serve to distinguish him from any other.

611. Poetic characters may be divided into two kinds, general and particular.

1*st.* General characters are, such as wise, brave, virtuous, without any farther distinction.

2*nd.* Particular characters express the species of bravery, of wisdom, of virtue, for which any one is eminent.

Illus. They exhibit the peculiar features which distinguish one individual from another, which mark the difference of the same moral quality in different men, according as it is combined with other dispositions in their temper. In drawing such particular characters, the genius of the poet is chiefly exerted.

Obs. In this part, Homer has principally excelled; Tasso has come the nearest to Homer; and Virgil has been the most deficient.

612. It has been the practice of all epic poets, to select some one personage, whom they distinguish above all the rest, and make the hero of the tale. This is considered as essential to epic composition, and is attended with several advantages.

Illus. 1. It renders the unity of the subject more sensible, when there is one principal figure, to which, as to a centre, all the rest refer. It tends to interest us more in the enterprise which is carried on; and it gives the poet an opportunity of exerting his talents for adorning and displaying one character, with peculiar splendour.

2. It has been asked, Who then is the hero of Paradise Lost? *Satan*, it has been answered by some critics; but Adam is undoubtedly the hero; that is, the capital and most interesting figure in the poem.

613. Besides human actors, there are personages of another kind, that usually occupy no small place in epic poet-

ry; namely, the gods, or supernatural beings; forming what is called the *machinery* of the epic poem.

Illus. 1. Almost all the French critics decide in favour of machinery, as essential to the constitution of an epic poem. This decision seems to be founded on the practice of Homer and Virgil. These poets very properly embellished their story by the traditional tales and popular legends of their own country; according to which, all the great transactions of the heroic times were intermixed with the fables of their deities. (*Illus. Art.* 29.)

2. In other countries, and other ages, where there is not the like advantage of current superstition, and popular credulity, epic poetry has been differently conducted. Lucan has composed a very spirited poem, certainly of the epic kind, where neither gods nor supernatural beings are at all employed. The author of Leonidas has made an attempt of the same kind, not without success; and beyond doubt, wherever a poet gives us a regular heroic story, well connected in its parts, adorned with characters, and supported with proper dignity and elevation, though his agents be every one of them human, he has fulfilled the chief requisites of this sort of composition, and has a just title to be classed with epic writers.

3. Mankind do not consider poetical writings with a philosophical eye. They seek entertainment from them; and for the bulk of readers, indeed for almost all men, the marvellous has a great charm. It gratifies and fills the imagination; and gives room for many striking and sublime descriptions. In epic poetry, in particular, where admiration and lofty ideas are supposed to reign, the marvellous and supernatural find, if any where, their proper place. They both enable the poet to aggrandize his subject, by means of those august and solemn objects which religion and supernatural agents introduce into it; and they allow him to enlarge and diversify his plan, by comprehending within it the realities of earth, the probabilities of Elysium and of Tartarus, men and invisible beings, and the whole circle of the universe.

614. At the same time, in the use of this supernatural machinery, it becomes a poet to be temperate and prudent. He is not at liberty to invent what system of the marvellous he pleases. It must always have some foundation in popular belief. He must avail himself in a decent manner, either of the religious faith, or the superstitious credulity of the country wherein he lives, or of which he writes, so as to give an air of probability to events which are most contrary to the common course of nature.

Illus. Whatever machinery he employs, he must not overload us with it; nor withdraw human actions and manners too much from view, nor obscure them under a cloud of incredible fictions. His chief business is to relate to *men*, the actions and the exploits of *men;* by these principally he is to interest, and touch our hearts; and, therefore, if probability be altogether banished from his work, it can never make a deep or a lasting impression. Paradise Lost being altogether theological, Milton's supernatural beings form not the machinery, but are the principal actors in the poem.

615. Allegorical personages, *fame, discord, love,* and the

like, it may be safely pronounced, have been supposed to form the worst machinery of any.

Illus. In description they are sometimes allowable, and may serve for embellishment; but they should never be permitted to bear any share in the action of the poem. For being plain and declared fictions, mere names of general ideas, to which even fancy cannot attribute any existence as persons, if they are introduced as mingling with human actors, an intolerable confusion of shadows and realities arise, and all consistency of action is utterly destroyed. *(See Art.* 307. *and* 308.)

616. In the *narration* of the poet, which is the last head that remains to be considered, it is not material, whether he relate the whole story in his own character, or introduce some of his personages to relate any part of the action that had passed before the poem opens.

Illus. Homer follows the one method in his Iliad, and the other in his Odyssey. Virgil has, in this respect, imitated the conduct of the Odyssey; Tasso that of the Iliad.

617. In the *proposition* of the subject, the *invocation* of the *muse*, and other ceremonies of the introduction, poets may vary at their pleasure.

Illus. It is trifling to make these little formalities the object of precise rule, any farther, than that the subject of the work should always be clearly proposed, and without affected or unsuitable pomp. For, according to Horace's noted rule, no introduction should ever set out too high, or promise too much, lest the author should not fulfil the expectations he has raised.

618. What is of most importance in the tenor of the *narration* is, that it be *perspicuous*, *animated*, and *enriched* with all the *beauties* of *poetry*. No sort of composition requires more *strength*, *dignity*, and *fire* of imagination, than the *epic poem*.

Illus. 1. It is the region within which we look for every thing that is sublime in description, tender in sentiment, and bold and lively in expression; and, therefore, though an author's plan should be faultless, and his story ever so well conducted, yet if he be feeble, or flat in style, destitute of affecting scenes, and deficient in poetical colouring, he can have no success.

2. The ornaments which epic poetry admits, must all be of the grave and chaste kind. Nothing that is loose, ludicrous, or affected, finds any place there. All the objects which it presents ought to be either great, or tender, or pleasing. Descriptions of disgusting or shocking objects should as much as possible be avoided; and therefore the fable of the Harpies, in the third book of the Æneid, and the allegory of Sin and Death, in the second book of Paradise Lost, had been better omitted in these celebrated poems.

Obs. The judicious teacher is left to illustrate, from the epic poems to which we have referred, the several branches of composition and ornament for which we have furnished rules or criteria of judgment.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

ON PRONUNCIATION, OR DELIVERY.

619. THE great objects which every speaker will naturally have in view in forming his delivery, are, first, to speak so as to be fully and easily understood by all who hear him; and next, to speak with grace and force, so as to please and to move his audience.

620. In order to be fully and easily understood, the four chief requisites are, a due degree of loudness of voice; distinctness; slowness; and propriety of pronunciation.

621. The first attention of every public speaker, doubtless, must be to make himself be heard by all those to whom he speaks. He must endeavour to fill with his voice the space occupied by the assembly.

Obs. 1. This power of voice, it may be thought, is wholly a natural talent. It is so in a good measure; but, however, it may receive considerable assistance from art. Much depends for this purpose on the proper pitch and management of the voice.

2. Every man has three pitches in his voice; the high, the middle, and the low one. The high, is that which he uses in calling aloud to some one at a distance. The low is, when he approaches to a whisper. The middle is, that which he employs in common conversation, and which he should generally use in public discourse.

622. In the next place, to being well heard, and clearly understood, distinctness of articulation contributes more, perhaps, than mere loudness of sound.

Obs. The quantity of sound necessary to fill even a large space, is smaller than is commonly imagined: and with distinct articulation, a man of a weak voice will make it reach farther than the strongest voice can reach without distinct articulation.

Corol. To this, therefore, every public speaker ought to pay great attention. He must give every sound which he utters, its due proportion, and make every syllable, and even every letter in the word which he pronounces, be heard distinctly; without slurring, whispering, or suppressing any of the proper sounds.

623. In the third place, in order to articulate distinctly, moderation is requisite with regard to the speed of pronouncing. Precipitancy of speech confounds all articulation, and all meaning.

Obs. We need scarcely observe, that there may be also an extreme on the opposite side. It is obvious, that a lifeless, drawling pronun-

ciation, which allows the minds of the hearers to be always outrunning the speaker, must render every discourse insipid and fatiguing. But the extreme of speaking too fast is much more common, and requires the more to be guarded against, because, when it has grown up into a habit, few errors are more difficult to be corrected.

624. After these fundamental attentions to the pitch and management of the voice, to distinct articulation, and to a proper degree of slowness of speech, what a public speaker must, in the fourth place, study, is, propriety of pronunciation; or the giving to every word which he utters, that sound, which the most polite usage of the language appropriates to it; in opposition to broad, vulgar, or provincial pronunciation.

Obs. This is requisite, both for speaking intelligibly, and for speaking with grace or beauty. Instructions concerning this article, can be given by the living voice only.

625. *Emphasis, pauses, tones,* and *gestures.*

626. By *emphasis,* is meant a *stronger* and *fuller sound* of voice, by which we distinguish the accented syllable of some word, on which we design to lay particular stress, and to show how it affects the rest of the sentence.

Obs. 1. Sometimes the emphatic word must be distinguished by a particular tone of voice, as well as by a stronger accent. On the right management of the emphasis, depend the whole life and spirit of every discourse.

2. If no emphasis be placed on any words, not only is discourse rendered heavy and lifeless, but the meaning left often ambiguous. If the emphasis be placed wrong, we pervert and confound the meaning wholly.

Example. "Do you ride to town to day?" is capable of no fewer than four different acceptations, according as the emphasis is differently placed on the words. If it be pronounced thus: Do *you* ride to town to-day? the answer may naturally be, No; I send my servant in my stead. If thus, Do you *ride* to town to-day? No; I intend to walk. Do you ride *to town* to-day? No; I ride out into the fields. Do you ride to town *to-day?* No; but I shall to-morrow.

Obs. 3. In like manner, in solemn discourse, the whole force and beauty of an expression often depend on the accented word; and we may present to the hearers quite different views of the same sentiment, by placing the emphasis differently.

Example. In the following words of our Saviour, observe in what different lights the thought is placed, according as the words are pronounced: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" *Betrayest* thou—makes the reproach turn on the infamy of treachery. Betrayest *thou*—makes it rest, upon Judas's connection with his Master. Betrayest thou the *Son of Man*—rests it, upon the Son of Man's personal character and eminence. Betrayest thou the Son of Man *with a kiss?*—turns it, upon his prostituting the signal of peace and friendship, to the purpose of a mark of destruction.

627. Next to emphasis, the *pauses* in speaking demand attention. These are of two kinds; first, *emphatical pauses;* and next, such as mark the *distinctions of sense.*

Illus. 1. An emphatical pause is made, after something has been said of peculiar moment, and on which we want to fix the hearer's attention. Sometimes before such a thing has been said, we usher it in with an emphatical pause. Such pauses have the same effect as a strong emphasis; and are subject to the same rules; especially to the caution just now given, of not repeating them too frequently. For as they excite uncommon attention, and of course raise expectation, if the importance of the matter be not fully answerable to such expectation, they occasion disappointment and disgust.

2. But the most frequent and the principal use of pauses, is to mark the divisions of the sense, and at the same time to allow the speaker to draw his breath; and the proper and graceful adjustment of such pauses is one of the most nice and difficult articles in delivery.

628. When we are reading or reciting verse, there is a peculiar difficulty in making the pauses justly. The difficulty arises from the melody of verse, which dictates to the ear pauses or rests of its own; and to adjust and compound these properly with the pauses of the sense, so as neither to hurt the ear, nor offend the understanding, is so very nice a matter, that it is no wonder we so seldom meet with good readers of poetry.

Illus. 1. There are two kinds of pauses that belong to the music of verse; one is, the pause at the end of the line; and the other, the cæsural pause in the middle of it. With regard to the pause at the end of the line; which marks that strain or verse to be finished, rhyme renders this always sensible, and in some measure compels us to observe it in our pronunciation.

2. In blank verse, where there is a greater liberty permitted of running the lines into one another, sometimes without any suspension in the sense, it has been made a question, Whether in reading such verse with propriety, any regard at all should be paid to the close of a line?

3. We ought, therefore, certainly to read blank verse so as to make every line sensible to the ear. At the same time, in doing so, every appearance of sing-song and tone must be carefully guarded against. The close of the line, where it makes no pause in the meaning, ought to be marked, not by such a tone as is used in finishing a sentence; but without either letting the voice fall, or elevating it, it should be marked only by such a slight suspension of sound, as may distinguish the passage from one line to another without injuring the meaning.

4. The other kind of musical pause, is that which falls somewhere about the middle of the verse, and divides it into two hemistichs; a pause, not so great as that which belongs to the close of the line, but still sensible to an ordinary ear. (*See Art.* 569.)

629. The rule of proper pronunciation here is, to regard only the pause which the sense forms; and to read the line accordingly. The neglect of the cæsural pause may make the line sound somewhat unharmoniously; but the effect

would be much worse, if the sense were sacrificed to the sound.

630. Tones in pronunciation are different both from emphasis and pauses; they consist in the *modulation* of the *voice*, and the *notes* or variations of *sound* which we employ in speaking.

Illus. 1. How much of the propriety, the force and grace of discourse, must depend on these, will appear from this single consideration; that to almost every sentiment we utter, more especially to every strong emotion, nature hath adapted some peculiar tone of voice; insomuch, that he who should tell another that he was very angry, or much grieved, in a tone which did not suit such emotions, instead of being believed, would be laughed at.

2. Sympathy is one of the most powerful principles by which persuasive discourse works upon the mind. The speaker endeavours to transfuse into his hearers his own sentiments and emotions: which he can never be successful in doing, unless he utters them in such a manner as to convince the hearers that he feels them. The proper expression of tones, therefore, deserves to be attentively studied by every one who would be a successful orator.

3. Follow nature; consider how she teaches you to utter any sentiment or feeling of your heart. Imagine a subject of debate started in conversation among grave and wise men, and yourself bearing a share in it. Think after what manner, with what tones and inflections of voice, you would on such an occasion express yourself, when you were most in earnest, and sought most to be listened to. These are the tones which the advocate carries with him to the bar, the clergyman, to the pulpit, and the patriot and demagogue, to any public assembly. Let then these be the foundation of your manner of pronouncing, and you will take the surest method of rendering your delivery both agreeable and persuasive.

631. Of GESTURE, *or what is called action in public discourse.*

632. The fundamental rule as to propriety of *action*, is undoubtedly the same with what hath been given as to propriety of tone. Attend to the looks and gestures, in which earnestness, indignation, compassion, or any other emotion, discovers itself to most advantage in the common intercourse of men; and let these be your models.

Illus. 1. Some of these looks and gestures are common to all men; and there are also certain peculiarities of manner which distinguish every individual. A public speaker must take that manner which is most natural to himself. For it is here, just as in tones.

2. It is not the business of a speaker to form to himself a certain set of motions and gestures, which he thinks most becoming and agreeable, and to practice these in public, without their having any correspondence to the manner which is natural to him in private. His gestures and motions ought all to carry that kind of expression which nature has dictated to him; and unless this be the case, it is impossible, by means of any study, to avoid their appearing stiff and forced.

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3. The study of action in public speaking, consists chiefly in guarding against awkward and disagreeable motions, and in learning to perform such as are natural to the speaker, in the most becoming manner. For this end it has been advised by writers on this subject, to practice before a mirror, where one may see and judge of his own gestures.

Scholium. To succeed well in delivery, nothing is more necessary than for a speaker to guard against a certain flutter of spirits, which is peculiarly incident to those who begin to speak in public. He must endeavour, above all things, to be collected, and master of himself. For this end, he will find nothing of more use to him, than to study to become wholly engaged in his subject; to be possessed with a sense of its importance or seriousness; to be concerned much more to persuade than to please. He will generally please most, when pleasing is not his sole nor chief aim. This is the only rational and proper method of raising one's self above that timid and bashful regard to an audience, which is so ready to disconcert a speaker, both as to what he is to say, and as to his manner of saying it.

Finally. Guard against all affectation, which is the certain ruin of good delivery. Let your manner, whatever it is, be your own; neither imitated from another, nor assumed upon some imaginary model, which is unnatural to you. Whatever is native, even though accompanied with several defects, yet is likely to please; because it has the appearance of coming from the heart. Whereas a delivery, attended with several acquired graces and beauties, if it be not easy and free, if it betray the marks of art and affectation, never fails to disgust.

THE END.